

Report

8

Report to:	Community Resources Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 September 2009
Report by:	Executive Director (Community Resources)

Subject:	Expansion of Entitlement to Free School Meals
----------	--

1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ outline the operational and financial impact of an expansion to free school meals' entitlement through changes in the eligibility criteria within the tax credit system.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the operational and financial impact associated with the change in eligibility criteria for the provision of free school meals be noted.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Scottish Government announced in autumn 2008 that the entitlement to free school meals would be extended in two ways. The first of these would be through the provision of free school meals to all P1-3 pupils. This would be rolled out by local authorities from August 2010.
- 3.2. The second involved extending entitlement to all primary and secondary pupils of families in receipt of the maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit. This is to be effective from August 2009.

4. Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit

- 4.1. Currently, families in receipt of Child Tax Credit and/or Working Tax Credit with a gross annual income of less than £16,040 (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) are eligible to receive free school meals for primary and secondary children.
- 4.2. This will now be extended to include all families in receipt of the maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit.
- 4.3. To arrive at the additional number of meals that will be provided from the planned changes to the eligibility criteria, it has been necessary to contact the Scottish Government. They estimate between 2,500 to 2,600 children across primary and secondary schools are likely to benefit.

5. Employee Implications

- 5.1. Additional resources may be required to support the estimated increase in children entitled to a free school meal.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. Estimates have been based on the mid point of the figures provided by the Scottish Government at 2,550 and assume a 75% uptake. Any associated loss of income has been taken into consideration as well as one off setup requirements (fridges, light equipment).
- 6.2. Additional costs to cover school meal production, training and equipment requirements have been identified. The table below provides a summary of the estimated costs for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011.

	2009/10	2010/11
Employee costs	£385,291	£529,717
Food costs	£203,982	£296,210
Loss of income	£257,028	£348,824
Set up costs	£119,420	£12,200
TOTAL	£965,721	£1,186,951

- 6.3. Although schools returned in mid-August, a full picture of the increase in uptake is unlikely to be known until the end of October. Given that the cost of this initiative is a factor of the levels of eligibility and uptake, the level of estimated costs will be reviewed once the actual increase in uptake is known.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1. Subject to the increase in number of pupils per school a review of dining room capacity and associated furniture will be necessary.

8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 8.1. There is no requirement to carry out an impact assessment in terms of the proposals contained within the report.
- 8.2. Consultation has taken place with the respective Trade Unions.

Norrie Anderson
Executive Director (Community Resources)

30 July 2009

Link(s) to Council Objectives and Values

- ◆ Improve health and increase physical activity
- ◆ Improve lives of vulnerable children, young people and adults

Previous References

None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ Concordat between the Scottish Government and Local Government (November 2007)
- ◆ The Education (School Lunches/(Scotland) Regulation 2009

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Stephen Kelly, Head of Facilities and Cultural Services

Ext: 4705 (Tel: 01698 454705)

E-mail: stephen.kelly@southlanarkshire.gov.uk