

**REPORT TO:** School Forum  
**DATE:** 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Senior Finance Officer, Financial Management Division  
**SUBJECT:** Universal Infant Free School Meal Grant

1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 **To report to the School Forum an update on the Universal Infant Free School Meal (UIFSM) Grant and the Free School Meal Service Level Agreement for 2014-15.**

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDED:

- (1) The report be noted.
- (2) A decision is made regarding how the shortfall in funding is dealt with.

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Background

The Education Funding Agency announced last Autumn that a new grant would be introduced to fund Free School Meals for all pupils in Years Reception to Year 2.

The conditions of grant were issued in May and presented at the School Forum meeting in June. The first payment of the grant was received at the end of June which has been fully distributed to eligible schools.

Free School Meal Service Level Agreement

The SLA charges were calculated before the end of the financial year to allow schools to make a choice of which SLA's they wish to purchase for the new financial year. As this calculation took place before the conditions of grant were issued, it was assumed that the grant would fund all infant pupils. Therefore the costs for these pupils were fully excluded from the SLA charges from September 2014.

As clarified in the conditions of grant, the UIFSM is only payable for infant pupils who are not currently eligible for Free School Meals as they are funded for within the Schools Block funding formula. The assumption made earlier in the year has resulted in a shortfall of charges for pupils currently eligible for Free School Meals. It has

been calculated that this shortfall amounts to approximately £224,000.

We have four options on how this can be treated:

- a) Schools pick up the cost from within their existing budget.
- b) Wait until the end of the financial year and only devolve additional funding to schools with UIFSM that will be in a deficit position at year-end. It is unknown how much additional funding would be needed.
- c) Devolve additional monies now to schools with UIFSM that are in financial difficulties.
- d) Devolve additional monies now to all schools with UIFSM who purchase services from the LA using monies carried forward from previous years.

#### Grant payments

The initial payment has been devolved to schools which covers the Autumn 2014 and Spring 2015 terms. The final allocation for 2014-15 will be calculated using both the October 2014 and January 2015 censuses. Following this calculation a further payment will be made to the local authority by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 which will cover the Summer term.

It should be noted that where a schools final allocation is lower than the payment made in June 2014, the difference will be deducted from the first payment of the UIFSM grant for the 2015-16 academic year.

#### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

#### 5.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None