

## **SPECIAL URGENCY Cabinet Report/Delegated Decision Form**

<b>Report/Decision Title</b>	Auto-enrolment of Free School Meals and maximising Pupil Premium Funding across Redcar and Cleveland
<b>Date of request</b>	27/06/2024
<b>Date of meeting/decision</b>	

### **Special Urgency - Reasons for urgency outlined below**

The pilot project is time sensitive with an enrolment completion date of September 2024 in readiness for the October 2024 census, which is the deadline Pupil Premium data to drive school funding.

All activities relating to the pilot need to start in the summer (June/July), prior to the schools breaking up at the end of the academic year.

Furthermore, the government has agreed transitional protections for Free School Meals will remain until March 2025. Transitional protection means that eligible pupils will continue to receive Free School Meals, even if their household is no longer eligible under the benefits/low earning criteria, up until March 2025 and then until the end of their phase of education.

There is insufficient time to comply with the usual notice period for key decisions in this case due to the timescales involved for rolling out the pilot.

**I confirm that I have sought agreement from the relevant chair of Scrutiny and Improvement Committee (or if there is no chair, or the chair is unable to act, the Mayor, or in their absence the Deputy Mayor) and the Cabinet Member and I am aware that any special urgency provisions must be reported to the Full Council by the Leader.**

<b>Officer name (Delegated Power Author)</b>	Louise Mason-Crowe	<b>Officer Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	27.06.24
<b>Assistant Director Name</b>	Clare Mahoney	<b>Assistant Director signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	27.06.24

**This urgent report/decision has been seen and agreed by the following:**

<b>Officer / Member</b>	<b>Signature</b>
Managing Director	
Section 151 Officer	
Monitoring Officer	
Leader/Chair of Cabinet (For Cabinet Decisions only)	
Cabinet Member	

Scrutiny Chair	Informed
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# Delegated Power Record

Are the details of the decision to be public or confidential?

## Public

If the details of the decision are confidential, please select the category for exemption under the Local Government Act 1972

Choose an item.

<b>Reference</b>	<b>CF-24-055</b>
<b>Corporate Plan Priority</b>	Start Life Well
<b>Delegation Title</b>	Auto-enrolment of Free School Meals and maximising Pupil Premium Funding across Redcar and Cleveland
<b>Delegated Power Number</b>	<b>DP310 - General duty to safeguard and promote the Welfare of Children who are in need and to promote the upbringing of children by their families.</b>
<b>Date of Exercise</b>	05/07/2024
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Bill Suthers
<b>Assistant Director</b>	Clare Mahoney

<b>Type of Decision (Key/Executive/Non-Executive)</b>	Key - Executive
<b>FOR KEY DECISIONS ONLY</b>	
<b>Delegated Power Forward Plan Ref</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Date Decision Published in Forward Plan</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Urgency (For Key Decisions not included in Forward Plan only)</b>	Special Urgency - Forms Attached

### Background to decision:

Pupil Premium is Grant funding provided to schools to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in state funded schools. If a child is missing out on Free School Meal entitlement, it is in all likelihood that the school is also missing out on the Pupil Premium. By optimising Free School Meals also means the school will benefit for additional Pupil Premium.

The report presents the proposed approach to optimise the take up of Free School Meals by children in the borough's schools and the associated increase in income for schools via the Pupil Premium through auto enrolment which is designed to:

- increase the number of children registered for Free School Meals and capture eligible children whose families have not submitted applications.

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- maximise the amount of Pupil Premium to Redcar and Cleveland schools.
- Increase school funding to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.

Auto-enrolment will ensure that schools are receiving the maximum benefit of Pupil Premium funding and free school meal entitlement and is linked to the attainment gap as well as contributing towards the Council's plan to start life well.

Nationally 1 in 10 children are not receiving the free school meal they are entitled to, and schools are not receiving the associated Pupil Premium funding.

In Redcar and Cleveland, utilising existing data sets held by the Council, it is suggested a potential of 1500 households with children are missing out on Free School Meals. Based on this figure, this would result in an additional £2,200,000 of Pupil Premium funding for primary school age children. If the pupils were of secondary age this would equate to £1,575,000.

There are a range of scenarios where children may be missing out on Free School Meals to which they are entitled. There is also an opportunity for schools to increase their Pupil Premium income by £1480.00 per pupil (primary school age), £1050.00 (secondary school age) which would otherwise be lost.

The scheme also contributes towards reducing poverty, as children will have access to a Free School Meal, which may currently be funded by the parent (a saving to the household of c£400.00 per child per year).

Access to a healthy meal for every eligible child will contribute towards the Council's Plan 2024-2027, striving to reduce child poverty in the borough and supporting children to thrive and fulfil their potential. It will ensure that the most vulnerable children and families in poverty have access to Free School Meals and will ensure children are receiving a healthy balanced diet and will contribute to wider health priorities such as reducing childhood obesity. In addition, this process will have the potential to support closing the attainment gap through the allocation of Pupil Premium funding to school.

### **Decision Considerations:**

Have you reviewed the Council's Contract Procedure Rules? N/A

Have you agreed what the Terms and Conditions will be with Legal Services? A DPIA is underway. Under Sections 512 and 512ZB of the Education Act 1996 the Local Authority, through schools, or alternatively academies, are required to provide Free School Meals if a child is eligible and a request for Free School Meals has been made by or on behalf of that person to the Authority. The Local Authority has the "general power of competence" under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 which may include automatically enrolling children eligible for Free School Meals.

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In addition, Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 states a Local Authority shall have the power to do anything (subject to any contrary provisions in the Education Act) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.

Central Government recognises the benefits of providing a healthy school meal to the most disadvantaged pupils. The Education Act 1996 requires maintained schools and academies (including free schools) to provide Free School Meals to disadvantaged pupils who are aged between 5 and 16 years old. The legislation the guidance refers to is: The Education Act 1996; The Welfare Reform Act 2012; Children and Families Act 2014.

The Department of Education (DfE) has provided non-statutory advice.

Have you carried out Supplier checks? N/A

If grant funded, are the funders conditions met? N/A

Are you giving away more than £315,000 to another entity? If so, have legal services been instructed and given approval in relation to whether Subsidy Control Rules apply? Please contact Legal Services. N/A

If you are procuring an IT hardware/software, has this been approved by IT/Digital Delivery Board? N/A

Has the full contract value been approved by Finance? N/A

If appropriate, has this been approved by Programme Management Group (PMG)? This has been approved by the Joint Director for Public Health – Mark Adams

Are there are other elements or future plans which may play a part in this decision or impact.

Only elements which impact are the outside timescale requirements to ensure we can maximise the outcomes for both the schools and the families concerned (as detailed in background)

### **Full details of decision:**

To progress a pilot initiative with schools, between officers across Revenues and Benefits Service, Education and Public Health, to support the implementation of auto-enrolment of Free School Meals, with the aim of increasing the number of children registered for Free School Meals and Pupil Premium, subject to the agreement of Redcar and Cleveland schools.

### **Financial detail:**

There is no direct financial cost to the LA however there will need to be some provision of staff time at the start to ensure that the names of those eligible are registered correctly into systems. Most of the schools (37) are registered with the LA already for services however 21 are not. For those schools we propose that we can support where needed to load all names etc into systems as we can ensure some economies of scale when delivering this.

### **Delivering Social Value:**

We will support our corporate plan to 'Start Life Well'

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We will ensure children are fed which raises their capacity to learn

We will be supporting those families who receive out of work benefits

We will be supporting families who experience cost of living issues or in work poverty

We will be supporting schools who would become eligible for additional Pupil Premium

We will be removing barriers from families who don't register for FSM due to the form filling or bureaucracy

We will be ensuring that children have access to a varied and healthy diet for at least one meal a day where this is not currently the case

We will be increasing the number of children and young people who are eligible to participate in the Holiday and Food Activity Programme

**Reasons for Decision:**

It will support to reduce child poverty and support children to thrive and reach their potential.

**Details of alternative options considered (if any) and reasons for rejection:**

**Do nothing:** To continue with the current application process whereby the responsibility rests with households to apply for Free School Meals, whilst this is still the route, the approach by the Council will ensure applications are maximised as is the Pupil Premium.

**Delay the auto-enrolment until the 2025 Census.** The current timescales are very tight by delaying this launch will allow for more robust plans to be put in place. Although any delay will impact on the transitional protection with the schools potentially missing out on financial support.

**Details of any conflict of interest declared by any Elected Member consulted in relation to the decision:**

This must be left blank. Business Support will seek this information from the Cabinet Member.

**Details of any dispensation granted in respect of any conflict of interest:**

This must be left blank. Business Support will seek this information from the Cabinet Member.

**Background Papers:**

State where any additional papers may be held, any background information (if applicable)

Briefing note and process map which accompanies the Delegated Power.

<b>Officer Name (Print)</b>	Louise Mason-Crowe & Anne Rose
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<b>Officer Signature</b>	 
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# Delegated Power Record




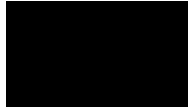
<b>Submission date</b>		
<b>Procurement Approval</b>	<b>N/A</b>	This must be the electronic signature of the Procurement Officer to confirm the decision complies with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules



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<b>Reference</b>	CF-24-055
<b>Delegated Power Forward Plan Reference</b>	
<b>Corporate Plan Priority</b>	Start Life Well
<b>Delegation Title</b>	Auto-enrolment of Free School Meals and maximising Pupil Premium Funding across Redcar and Cleveland
<b>Delegated Power Number</b>	DP310 - General duty to safeguard and promote the Welfare of Children who are in need and to promote the upbringing of children by their families.
<b>Date of Exercise</b>	05/07/2024
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	CLlr Bill Suthers
<b>Assistant Director</b>	Claire Mahoney

## Signatures

<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN</b> 	<b>Date 05/07/2024</b>
<b>CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER</b> 	<b>Date 05/07/2024</b>
<b>CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER</b> 	<b>Date 01/07/2024</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES</b> 	<b>Date 05/07/2024</b>

## Call-In (Key Decisions Only)

Call-In to be dis-applied due to urgency, reasons as follows:

The timescales to implement this are tight. Schools or the Local Authority would have to apply for the FSM in September. Parents need to have consultation time to opt out. We have said 3 weeks for this given the upcoming school holidays. This leaves 3 weeks for all the authority and time to apply through the system.

<b>Date Decision will become effective</b>	N/A
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