

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**10 September 2013**

**Joint Report of the Strategic Director for  
Children & Younger Adults and the Director of Public Health**

**Breakfast Club Funding for Vulnerable Children – (Children and Young People)**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

To seek approval from the Cabinet to the proposed use of funding for a pilot project creating breakfast clubs in a number of primary and junior schools having the highest percentage of children eligible to receive free school meals.

**2. Information and Analysis**

It has long been recognised that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. In an ideal world all children would have eaten a nutritious breakfast before setting off to school. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Head teachers are aware of the importance of a healthy breakfast in terms of children being 'ready to learn'.

Research undertaken by the leading children's food charity, Magic Breakfast, found that in schools where children attended a breakfast club, 93% of staff noticed an increase in children's concentration and energy, and 74% noticed an improvement in their behaviour.

Rising family costs and reduced income means that child nutrition in the UK is getting worse. A hungry child cannot concentrate, the impact of which is poor performance and behaviour in the classroom. Consultation with head teachers from some of the proposed schools indicate that the financial circumstances of many families mean they are unable to provide a nutritious breakfast and children come into the classroom either hungry or on a 'sugar high' as a result of what they have eaten for breakfast. Often these are the children who either arrive late or are those left unsupervised in the playground before the start of the school day. This clearly impacts on concentration, behaviour and overall performance in class.

Following consultation with a group of head teachers, it was proposed that:

- schools bid for funding on the basis of what they would be able to provide for children in the school and what the expected outcomes of this might be
- funding is calculated using the numbers of children within the school eligible for free school meals

- head teachers and governors are able to use the money to best meet the needs of their children and families
- delivery, outcomes and evaluation, both qualitative and quantitative, will be undertaken by the Education Advisory Service and Public Health to support a high quality, consistent evaluation of the breakfast club interventions in the selected schools

### 3. **Financial Considerations**

Experience over a number of years has shown that to successfully run this kind of provision, there needs to be a minimum regular level of attendance and income. Many schools have attempted to establish breakfast clubs in the past and these have closed as a result of poor attendance meaning that expenditure is greater than income.

There will be staffing, food and resource costs. In an ideal world fees charged to parents would cover this cost. However, this is not an ideal world. In this economic climate many families are struggling to make ends meet and could not afford to pay the full cost of this provision, no matter how reasonable this seems. A large percentage of the school population are either eligible for free school meals or from families whose incomes are just above the free school meals threshold.

The cost per year to run a breakfast club provision varies dependent upon how this is staffed and what the level of attendance is. The number of free and subsidised places is, therefore, determined by this.

The aim of this pilot is to improve attainment, attendance, punctuality, concentration and behaviour, by providing primary school children with an opportunity to attend a breakfast club offering both a nutritious breakfast but also informative and fun activities which aim to improve outcomes for the child. In order to evidence this and show value for money, it is proposed to run a pilot scheme in a small number of schools. Often pilot schools are selected on the basis of the deprivation decile they are in, but this can result in some schools in 'pockets of deprivation' being missed.

The following schools have, therefore been selected on the following criteria:

- The schools where there is the largest percentage of children eligible for free school meals.
- The school population is sufficient to support a sustainable breakfast club (including infant and nursery feeder schools) in the longer term.

School	Total Pupils	% FSM	No. FSM
Spire Junior	113	54.9	62
Cotmanhay Jun	200	54.5	109

Gamesley Com Pri	267	44.2	118
Creswell Junior	179	44.1	79
Duckmanton Pri	171	39.2	67
William Rhodes Pri	186	38.7	72
North Wingfield Jun	242	37.6	91
Staveley Junior	122	36.9	45
Model Village Pri	198	35.4	70
Somerlea Park Pri	162	33.7	57
Castle View Pri	142	33.6	48
Dallimore Pri	266	33.5	89
Ironville/Codnor Park Pri	107	33.0	46
New Bolsover Pri	248	31.0	77
Whaley Thorns Pri	162	30.9	50
Woodbridge Jun	120	30.8	37
Park Junior	209	30.6	64
Heath Primary	276	30.4	84
Grassmoor Pri	210	30.0	63
Whitecotes Pri	236	29.7	70
Blackwell Pri	135	29.6	40
Langley Mill Jun	225	29.3	66
Herbert Strutt Pri	192	29.2	56
Stonebroom Pri	138	29.2	42
Sharley Park Pri	371	29.1	108

This kind of provision often takes some time to become embedded and there will need to be a reasonable period of time working with children in order to see the results in terms of improved attainment levels and the closing of the gap. On this basis, it is proposed that there is a commitment to funding this programme by Public Health for two years, after which time the evaluation will determine whether these clubs should be funded for a further period.

The cost of the project will be £180,000. The pilot will be joint funded by Children and Younger Adults and Public Health. It has been agreed that Public Health will contribute £115,000 to this initiative and the Children and Younger Adult Department £65,000. The source for the Children and Younger Adults department contribution will be from the earmarked reserve holding the underspend from the Local Area Agreement – Children's block. On 30 July, Cabinet approved a paper submitted by Public Health seeking approval of the Public Health Programme, of which the Breakfast Club funding forms a part.

As this funding will only cover the cost of food, there is an expectation that schools will contribute, as necessary, to meet the cost of staffing and resources, which is the most expensive element of this kind of provision, calculated to be around 75% of the cost per place. Schools will be asked to submit applications for funding, outlining their proposals and associated costs.

The scheme will be reviewed at the end of the pilot and the implications for affordability will be considered before extending this to other schools.

#### 4. **Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: - prevention of crime & disorder, equality of opportunity; environmental, health, human resources, legal & human rights, property and transport considerations.

#### 5. **Key Decision**      No.

#### 6. **Background Papers**

Supporting papers held in CAYA Early Years and Childcare Section/Public Health.

#### 7. **Recommendations of the Strategic Directors for Children & Younger Adults and Public Health**

That Cabinet:

- Approves the proposals to establish a Breakfast Club pilot;
- Supports the proposed commitment for two years followed by an evaluation and review of affordability;
- Authorise delegated authority to the Strategic Director for Children and Younger Adults to extend the pilot to include the next group of schools should the funding allow for this; and
- Agrees to receive further reports on this development, as required.