

## **WIRRAL COUNCIL**

**WIRRAL SCHOOLS FORUM - 23 JANUARY 2013**

### **REPORT OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

#### **DELEGATION AND CHANGES TO SCHOOL MILK ARRANGEMENTS**

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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The report describes arrangements that could be put in place by schools to administer the provision of milk to children following delegation of this budget from April 2013.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

The changes to schools funding from 2013-14 will result in the delegation of school milk budgets to schools, the net amounts transferred are:

Nursery	£3,000
Primary	£148,600
Secondary	£30,000
Special	£3,000

These amounts represent the cost of free milk in schools less a milk subsidy from the Rural Payments Agency of £105,000.

Where schools agree to buy back a service from the local authority then the current provision may continue, with schools completing orders, collecting cash and submitting monitoring returns

Where this is not the case the following arrangements will need to be made:

- Set up an account with the Nursery Milk Reimbursement Unit (NMRU) and the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) to claim back subsidy funds
- Set up an account with a dairy and keep all paperwork for up to 6 years for audit purposes
- Complete a monthly claim for reimbursement of all milk purchased
- Be audited by the NMRU and the RPA regarding their school claim
- Collect and bank monies from parents for the over-5's scheme
- Manage administration relating to the payment of milk invoices

In view of the above, the Local Authority has met with a company "Cool Milk" who offer schools an administrative support package at no cost. They are the only company set up to offer this level of service to schools.

## **3. COOL MILK**

3.1 Cool Milk has been operating for 14 years in schools and early years settings, they currently work with 115 Local Authorities including: Cheshire, Sefton, Stockport and Halton, administering the ordering and income collection for milk in schools. They have a dedicated help line and web-portal for queries and for schools to confirm weekly orders of milk, correspond with parents for the over 5's and provide promotional material and supply free fridges for storing milk in school. Cool Milk also work in partnership with Local Authority Catering Association, Children's Food Trust and Change4life.

- 3.2 Milk is currently supplied to schools by Fresh Pastures. This is a contract costing £357,000 pa for schools until January 2014. This contract would remain in place. Charges would be honoured for the price of milk in the first year, with possibly small incremental increases dependant on market values thereafter. Should the contract with the current milk supplier end then Cool Milk would alter to another supplier.
- 3.3 If a school orders under 5 milk and free milk for children on free school meals Cool Milk will take over administration of the NMRU and RPA claim on their behalf, invoicing the school monthly in arrears for the cost of milk minus the RPA allowance. This will ensure that the price paid does not increase. They will also collect money directly from parents for 5-11 pupil paid milk.

#### **4. TIMESCALES AND OPTIONS**

- 4.1 A suggested timescale for the changeover if approved would be 1<sup>st</sup> April. However a later date may be possible allowing for discussions with schools and headteachers.
- 4.2 Cool Milk have indicated that although they would prefer an authority wide scheme arrangements can be made with individual schools.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That a paper be presented to Cabinet recommending the appointment of Cool Milk to administer the school milk scheme.
2. That information is sent to all schools outlining the options available to them and enclosing relevant supporting information.

**Julia Hassall**  
**Acting Director of Children's Services**