

9 March 2015**Agenda Item: 09****REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, TRANSPORT, PROPERTY &
ENVIRONMENT****THE NATIONAL SCHOOL FOOD PLAN****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides an update on the National School Food Plan which was announced in July 2013 and progress on the actions required to deliver the Plan in Nottinghamshire.

Information and Advice

2. The Environment and Resources Department provides a school meals service to a number of primary and secondary schools and academies across the County. 94% of primary schools and academies and 56% of secondary schools and academies buy back their catering service from the County Council.
3. A number of schools and academies have chosen to either manage the catering services directly themselves (27) or procure an arrangement with a private sector catering provider (5).
4. The responsibility for the delivery of the National School Food Plan sits with schools. However, with NCC being the largest catering provider, the schools catering team will have a major role in supporting schools to support the implementation of the National School Food Plan.

Background

5. As reported to this Committee in April 2014, the Secretary of State for Education in 2012 commissioned a plan to be produced looking at the issues and concerns that had been raised nationally over a number of years in respect of school food. The findings identified that the quality of food had improved enormously since Jamie Oliver's intervention in 2005 and there was clear and measurable improvements in the nutritional quality of most food and a reduction in the sale of "junk" food. However after considerable research there was considerable evidence of good practice but the importance of school food had yet to become fully integrated into the school day. Messrs Dimbleby and Vincent, the authors of the plan, also concluded that the best schools incorporate food education, such as cooking, growing vegetables and even animal husbandry, into their curriculum and those that promote the service are able to achieve a financially viable operation.

6. The report recommended the following key actions in order to improve school meals:
- incorporate cooking into the curriculum for Key Stages 1 to 3
 - train head teachers in food and nutrition
 - replace the existing nutritional food standards with a food based standards approach
 - Public Health England to promote policies which improve children's diets in schools
 - Ofsted inspectors to consider the way a school promotes healthy lifestyles
 - ensure small schools are fairly funded in the provision of school food
 - increase meal take up in junior and secondary schools
 - set up financially sufficient breakfast clubs
 - develop a website to share best practice
 - improve the image of school food
 - improve the skills of the school food workforce
 - introduce Universal Free School Meals to all Key Stage 1 pupils from 1 September 2014.

Universal Free School Meals for Key Stage 1 pupils

7. The impact of this initiative in Nottinghamshire again as previously reported was extremely significant. Although meal numbers served had increased over the past five years, the overall take up in primary schools was 45%. This includes both paid and premium free meal numbers (i.e. free meals provided under the low household income criteria), measured against a total on roll figure. Currently free meals take up is approximately 80% against the entitlement. Based on an estimated 85% take-up by pupils in Key Stage 1, planning took place to produce an additional 10,000 to 12,000 meals per day equating to an overall take up of 75% in primary schools after the introduction of Universal Free School Meals. **Appendix 1** provides details of the cumulative take-up position as at 31st December 2014. It should be noted that this measurement is taken against total entitlement therefore assumes every pupil attends school every day. Numbers have increased on a month by month basis and we expect this trend to continue over the spring term 2015.
8. Nottinghamshire's capital funding allowance from the Department for Education was £1.7m; and made available to support the additional infrastructure requirements in kitchens. First year revenue funding allocations was announced by the Government at £2.30 a meal, representing the national average cost of providing a school meal. For the financial year 2015/16 the service will revert to a single price charging to schools for all meals served i.e. £2.15. For the Autumn Term 2014 and Spring Term 2015 the service charged schools the full £2.30 to recover costs of additional expenditure required for cutlery, crockery and service equipment for which additional funding was required.
9. In total 110 projects were identified ranging from the addition of an oven to full kitchen refurbishments and most projects were completed by the 1 September 2014 deadline and a hot meal was available in every school from the first day of term.
10. Three main contractors supported this programme and worked exceptionally hard in supporting us. One of the suppliers has been shortlisted for the 2015 CEDA Awards for their work on this programme. As part of the project the development of three hub kitchens were also completed at College House Junior School, Mapplewells Primary

School and Meden Torch Academy – these are able to produce in excess of 700 meals a day each which is approximately two thirds of the capacity in daily use to fulfil meal requirements. Where kitchens cannot produce meals due to short term equipment failure or staff shortages the hubs are able to provide a speedy response.

11. County Hall are also now producing up to 500 meals a day for West Bridgford Infant and Junior schools where there is no physical space to have a kitchen. Visits by pupils to County Hall to see how and where their lunches come from has received positive press coverage. The schools are extremely satisfied with the meals they are receiving and this change has removed pressure from the previous two providing kitchens who can now concentrate on their own additional universal infant free school meals.
12. Maintained schools with a self-managed service were also contacted and funds allocated according to the same criteria as applied to County Council managed services.

Other Food Plan Action Requirements

13. Introducing the new food based standards has not been a problem and indeed new legislation from the Food Standards Agency of publishing notification of the 15 allergen requirements was completed for the Autumn term menu cycle. Additionally, as reported to Council at the January meeting, the service has achieved Gold standard accreditation under the food for life scheme (the service previously held Silver) so Members and parents can be assured that ingredient preparation and sourcing is amongst the best in the country.
14. Joint working is underway with both Public Health and the Food for Life Partnership in targeting lower meal take-up schools under the junior and secondary school criteria. This will include the promotion of the meals service to parents and schools. As part of this initiative The Cooking Bus is available to 16 School Chefs in March 2015 for a training session and also there is a planned session for Food Technology teachers in Nottinghamshire which has been advertised to all schools.
15. The other actions required are managed by schools and academies themselves:
 - a. Put cooking into the curriculum in key stages 1 to 3 (*5 to 14 year olds*) – *various initiatives proposed ranging from basic principles of a healthy diet to competency in a range of cooking techniques*) work by DfE now underway
 - b. Set-up financially self-sufficient breakfast clubs - *a number of breakfast clubs have been established however they are often reliant on parents volunteering and therefore not viable if wages are being paid for staff.* Supported by Magic Breakfast they will be contacting schools directly. Magic Breakfast is a UK registered charity “dedicated to ensuring every child starts their school day with the right breakfast as fuel for learning. Magic Breakfast believes no child's education should suffer for the lack of a breakfast.”
 - c. Investigate the case for extending free school meals entitlement – *the price of a school meal is an issue for low income families especially those with more than one child. Consideration is being given to the cost benefits of free meals to wider criteria of pupils.* On-going. Additionally in Nottinghamshire work is ongoing to change the

emphasis on registering for Free School Meals as being a “free meal” to the importance of registering to enable your child’s school to claim pupil premium which supports extra resources for the school.

- d. Train head teachers in food and nutrition – *from a survey carried out, 91% of head teachers agreed that eating healthy, nutritious food improves attainment and pupil behaviour. The National College for Teaching and Leadership that sets standards for head teacher training, has agreed that content on food and nutrition should be included in their head teacher programme.*
- e. Public Health England to promote policies which improve children’s diets in schools - *Support will be provided by Public Health England to the local health & wellbeing boards to promote effective practice in improving children’s diets in schools.* Work has commenced with Nottinghamshire Public Health team to ensure a joint approach is made between ourselves as service providers and the Public Health strategic planning input.
- f. Ofsted inspectors to consider the way a school promotes healthy lifestyles – *the Chief Inspector of Schools is planning to revise inspection guidelines to cover schools leadership in promoting healthy lifestyle and the overall management of the lunch time process. In recent years less and less time, particularly in secondary schools, has been devoted to providing an adequate period in the day to serve and consume food in a way that promotes good behaviour.*
- g. Measure success to ensure school food plan is working – this will include take-up, quality of food (number of schools meeting the standards), proportion of 16 year olds who can cook a repertoire of savoury dishes, morale of the workforce and proportion of schools with a quality award e.g. Food for Life Partnership award. Nottinghamshire County Council managed schools are currently at the Gold Standard.
- h. Develop a website to share best practice – both the Guardian and the Times Educational Supplement now have dedicated areas on their websites to school food and what works well. Now in place.
- i. Improve the image of school food – a number of commercial industry experts are now working on how the image can be improved so pupils can be encouraged to eat school meals. On-going
- j. Bring school cooks closer to the rest of the catering sector and improve the skills of the school food workforce - there are currently 60,000 people working in the delivery of school food, qualification based off-the-job training is seldom provided. Greater emphasis will be placed on both training and involvement in high profile media events. Nationally supported and on-going

Conclusion

- 16. Delivering the National School Food Plan represents a significant and unprecedented challenge to the schools catering service. Colleagues from Children, Families and Cultural Services and Property Services are engaged in the preliminary planning process and will assist in ensuring its successful delivery.

Other Options Considered

17. None.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

18. With 94% of primary schools obtaining their catering service from the County Council, the service has a key role in supporting schools with the delivery of the infrastructure required by the National School Food Plan.

Statutory and Policy Implications

19. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That the update on the National School Food Plan and the progress on actions required to deliver the Plan in Nottinghamshire be noted.

Jas Hundal

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Constitutional Comments

20. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments

21. As this report is for noting only, financial comments are not required.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

The School Food Plan www.schoolfoodplan.com

The National School Food Plan – report to Children and Young People’s Committee on 23 April 2014.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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