

**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, TRANSPORT, PROPERTY &
ENVIRONMENT****SCHOOL FOOD PLAN****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report provides an information update to the Committee on the introduction of the National School Food Plan.

Information and Advice

2. The Environment & Resources Department provides a school meals service to a number of Primary, Secondary and Academies across the County. 94% of primary and academies and 56% of secondary and academies buy back their catering service from the County Council.
3. The School Food Plan was launched in July 2013, and identified that that the best schools weave food education such as cooking, growing vegetables and even animal husbandry into their curriculum and also those that promote the service are able to achieve a financially viable operation. These findings backed up by national statistics also suggested that 20% of children are obese by the time they leave primary school at 11 and that obesity is costing the NHS £10bn every year.
4. As previously reported the responsibility for the delivery of the school food plan sits with schools however with NCC being the largest catering provider the schools catering team have a major role in supporting schools implement this national initiative.

School Food Plan Progress – Key Actions

- 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. **Introduce food – based standards for all schools - Independent schools and academies were previously excluded from the nutritional regulations. The new standards will still only apply to those academies who now convert, existing academies remain outside of the regulations. Menus now in operation comply with the new food based standards.**

- c. **Kick-start increased take-up of schools food** - *Contracts have been let by the DFE to assist schools, excluding those delivering infant free meals, across the country who have a take-up of 75%, or less of their free meal entitlement pupils. This applies to Junior or Secondary Schools. The Food for Life Partnership launched this initiative w/c 3/11/2014. The list received suggests that in Nottinghamshire there are 26 schools out of 76 in total that meet this criteria, 14 being managed by County Council and 12 either self-managed or by a contractor. "Support being offered includes six training events for school leaders, caterers and school cooks, a tailored action plan and a range of resources and support from specialist regional staff" This offer will be promoted directly to schools*
- d. **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."*
- e. **Set-up flagship boroughs to demonstrate the impact of improving school food on a large scale** – *Early criticisms of the work that had so far been going on is that there were excellent examples of good practice in individual schools and those that were well supported, as is the case of Nottinghamshire with a local authority provision. The challenge is to see how ALL schools within an area can improve take-up and what those benefits are, i.e. impact on obesity, educational attainment and attendance issues. This doesn't apply to Nottinghamshire*
- f. **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*
- g. **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.*
- h. **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.*
- i. **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.

- j. **Measure success to ensure school food plan is working** – These will include take-up, quality of food, (number of schools meeting the standards), proportion of sixteen year olds who can cook a repertoire of savoury dishes, morale of the workforce, proportion of schools with a quality award e.g. Food for Life Partnership award. **Nottinghamshire County Council managed schools are currently at the Silver Standard and following a recent assessment, final confirmation is awaited on achieving Gold.**
- k. **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.**
- l. **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**
- m. **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**

Universal Free School Meals for Key Stage 1 pupils

- 5. As reported previously to the Committee this area of work posed the biggest challenge to the service. First reports for the October census figures suggest an overall take-up of the offer to be 80.8%, the plans we put in place estimated an increase take-up to 85%. Members will be aware that the roll out of this initiative included a £1.7m capital allocation and a very short timescale. Over 100 projects were identified that included the establishment of 3 hub kitchens capable of producing 750 meals a day together with the installation of extra cooking equipment and changes to ventilation systems. Some schools have indicated that they might like to move to a hot meal only provision. i.e. pupils that are eligible are no longer allowed to bring in a packed lunch provision but clearly this is a matter for themselves to consider in conjunction with parents and governors.
- 6. A further national £20m capital allocation has been announced and the authority is in the process of bidding for further funding to potentially carry-out 3 more projects that were unable to be completed under the initial round.

Conclusion

- 7. Good progress on the implementation of school food plan in Nottinghamshire is being made. As well as fulfilling the first responsibility of ensuring all Key stage 1 pupils had access to a free school meal from the first day of the autumn term, work is now underway in targeting schools that meet the eligibility criteria for additional support. Subject to final approval from the Soil Association achieving the Gold standard ensures that the food element which is in the control of the schools catering service also supports the school food plan implementation.

8. Monitoring of meal numbers on a school by school basis will continue over the Autumn Term with efforts targeting those schools that are not achieving above a 75% premium free meal entitlement take-up rate, and / or less than an average overall take-up of 70% to identify what additional support can be provided to increase meal numbers.

Statutory and Policy Implications

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), 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 information supplied on the introduction of the National School Food Plan in Nottinghamshire be noted.

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Constitutional Comments

10. This report is for noting only no Constitutional Comments are required

Financial Comments

11. As this report is for noting only, no financial comments are 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.

School Food Plan www.schoolfoodplan.com

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected - ALL