

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

1. This report provides information to the Committee on the recent development and proposed 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. A number of schools and academies have chosen to either manage the catering services directly themselves or have procured an arrangement with a private sector catering provider.
4. 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 will have a major role in supporting schools to implement the National School Food Plan. It is anticipated that a report will be required to CYPS in March 2014 (to be scheduled) to identify the funding mechanisms involved in delivery of the School Food Plan – this includes capital to ensure kitchen capacity sufficient for anticipated meal number increase, light equipment required and funding for provision of the actual meals (food and labour etc).

Background**School Food Plan Report**

5. Henry Dimbleby & John Vincent, founders of the LEON restaurant chain, were appointed by the Secretary of State for Education in 2012 to look at the issues and concerns that had been raised nationally over a number of years in respect of school food. Their 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.

Nutritional standards for school meals introduced in 2010 which are based around compliance with minimum and maximums allowed across 13 nutrients balanced over a 15 day (3 week) cycle.

6. The report identifies 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.
7. These findings are linked to national statistics which suggest 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. This report has led to the development of a National School Food Plan which was launched in July 2013.
8. Key actions are :-
 - i. **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*
 - ii. **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.*
 - iii. **Kick-start increased take-up of schools food -** *contracts are currently being let by the DFE to assist the 2,000 schools across the country (10%) who have a take-up of 25% or below. Further details are awaited of how that is going to be achieved.*
 - iv. **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.*
 - v. **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, ie impact on obesity, educational attainment and attendance issues.*
 - vi. **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.*
 - vii. **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.*
 - viii. **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.*
 - ix. **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.

- x. **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.*
- xi. **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.*
- xii. **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.*
- xiii. **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.*
- xiv. **Small schools taskforce and ensure small schools are fairly funded** – *Small rural schools face a significant challenge in ensuring adequate funding to support a lunchtime service. A suggestion will be made from the Secretary of State to Councils identifying an appropriate amount required to deliver a food service.*

9. Recommendation was:

- a. “The government should embark upon a phased roll out of free school meals for all primary school children, beginning with local authorities with the highest percentage of children eligible for free school meal”.

This recommendation has now been largely adopted and free school meals will be available for primary school children Key Stage 1 (5-7 year olds) from September 2014.

Nottinghamshire County Council Challenges

Universal Free School Meals Key Stage 1

10. It is estimated that an additional 10,000 meals per day (a 45% increase on current meals served), will be served costing schools £4m per year. As yet the funding amount going to schools has yet to be calculated. Nottinghamshire has been awarded £1.9m capital funding to implement the scheme. Work is currently being undertaken with schools to identify what additional equipment requirements there are including ovens, fridges & freezers and cutlery etc. It is estimated we shall need to recruit and train an additional 500 hours per day of staffing to deliver the increase meal sales. (This equates to approx 67 FTE. However, the posts will be part time, term time only contracts and in some cases will be additional hours for existing employees). With this roll out happening across the country there are additional pressures on the supplies of both equipment and food.

11. Preliminary consultations have taken place with schools and the common concerns raised are lack of available dining space, adequacy of equipment, increased costs of lunchtime supervision, extra furniture requirements and possible changes to school timetables to say allow for 2 sittings. Additionally kitchen size and ventilation compliance are problems in a number of schools that will require technical support and advice.

School Food Plan Actions

12. Nottinghamshire is well placed in the delivery of other aspects of the schools food plan for example being an early pioneer of the Food for Life scheme we are accredited at Silver level and therefore compliant with the food standards. A significant number of catering staff as part of their development are trained and accredited to NVQ standards.
13. The service also where requested supports school cookery clubs and runs a number of training sessions for parents. School chefs participate on a regular basis in school councils making sure any concerns and ideas raised by pupils are addressed.
14. The issue regarding small schools like many Shire Authoritys is a challenge. Currently the group contract for Primary schools manages the service on a cross subsidised basis thereby ensuring a standard selling price can be maintained that covers all associated costs in delivering the school meals service. For Secondary Schools and Academies they are outside of this arrangement and are on a full cost recovery basis for each school. Once the funding model and financial model is developed, the increasing number of academies conversions and an increase take-up consultation should commence on moving to an individual site by site financial recovery basis. It is considered that the increase in meal sales will ensure a higher number are financially viable and for those larger schools will ensure that income generated can be used towards increased lunchtime supervision costs and other areas of expenditure.
15. In respect to take-up of meals whilst overall achieving the national average at around 43% we do have some schools who will be targeted as a part of the 2,000 national schools with less than a 25% take-up. 70 schools across the Primary & Secondary sectors have been identified in Nottinghamshire however we have yet to see a list or validate the data from the DfE Part of that criteria is based on free meal take-up against entitlement an area that has been consistently targeted with minimum impact to date it will therefore be interesting to see what proposals are suggested. Contracts are current being let by the DfE for a partner to assist in increasing take-up via direct access to schools.

Self – Managed Schools

16. Appropriate advice and guidance as well as support will also be provided to self managed schools in order to enable them to implement the Universal Free School Meals Programme.

Other Options Considered

None

Reasons for Recommendations

17. 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 school food plan.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. 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 Committee notes the contents of this report and actions required to deliver the National School Food Plan in Nottinghamshire.
- (2) A further report is brought to Committee after further consultation with schools on the implementation of Universal Free School Meals programme before the Summer recess.

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Background Papers - The School Food Plan www.schoolfoodplan.com

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected
All
Nottinghamshire