

# Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 20 May 2014

## Food for Life Accreditation in Edinburgh's Schools

Item number	7.10
Report number	
Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	All

### Executive summary

---

At its meeting on 30 May 2013, Council considered a report "Trust in the Food we Eat" and noted plans to expand the Food for Life Catering Mark standard across all Council catering operations, starting with schools, and to receive a further report.

This report provides Education, Children and Families Committee with progress to achieving the Food for Life accreditation in the city's schools.

The aim is to have all schools accredited by April 2015.

### Links

---

Coalition pledges	<a href="#">P43</a>
Council outcomes	<a href="#">C010; C015</a>
Single Outcome Agreement	<a href="#">S02</a>

## Food for Life Accreditation in Edinburgh's Schools

### Recommendations

---

Committee is asked to note:

- 1.1 The work achieved to date towards the Food for Life roll out across Council schools with plans on track to have Catering Mark accreditation in place in all schools by April 2015.
- 1.2 That the Food for Life roll out is forming a key part of the newly formed "Catering Improvement Programme" set up to manage the various emerging requirements for the school meals service including free school meals for Primary 1-3 pupils, meeting Food for Life standards as well as any emerging requirements from ongoing quality and efficiency reviews.
- 1.3 That the Food for Life roll out plans align with recent recommendations within the Scottish Government's *Better Eating, Better Learning* report, demonstrating that the Council is well prepared to meet or exceed those recommendations through this programme.
- 1.4 The programme involves both Council-run and Public Private Partnership (PPP) schools.
- 1.5 That an update will be provided on financial implications arising from moving towards silver and gold standards for all schools once bronze is achieved.

### Background

---

- 2.1 At its meeting on 30 May 2013, the Council noted plans to expand the Food for Life Catering Mark standard across all Council catering operations, starting with schools, and to receive a further report. This report outlines an action plan for implementing the roll out for schools and details progress to date.
- 2.2 Since May 2013, the Scottish Government has announced that free school meals are to be made available to all primary 1-3 pupils from January 2015. Uptake of this is expected to be around 75% and approximately 60% across all Council primary schools.
- 2.3 A "Catering Improvement Programme" (CIP) short-life working group comprising representatives of Children and Families, Corporate Property and Soil

Association Scotland has been established to explore how the Council might best harness the potential opportunities arising within school catering to create an excellent service across Edinburgh. The CIP will develop a programme which meets the combined needs detailed above whilst continuing to increase both free and paid-for school meal uptake and therefore the income received by the service to ensure the costs to the Council reduce over time.

Recommendations arising from the CIP will be submitted to the relevant committee(s) once they are developed. They are not expected to impact significantly on the recommendations made within this report because Food for Life standards are expected to fit with whatever service structure is established.

## Main report

---

- 3.1 Funded by the Scottish Government, the Soil Association's Food for Life Scotland programme aims to transform food culture so we can all eat healthy, local and seasonal food that is good for us, our communities and the planet.
- 3.2 The Food for Life Catering Mark underpins the programme, and helps organisations demonstrate a clear commitment to serving fresh, healthy food which is environmentally sustainable and ethically sourced. It includes standards of traceability, quality and provenance for meals with annual inspections to ensure standards are met. The Catering Mark offers a step-wise framework for progression, working from bronze to silver and gold standard (detailed in appendix 1). The standards are overseen by an independent committee of industry professionals.
- 3.3 As well as the City of Edinburgh Council, eight other local authorities in Scotland have achieved the Food for Life Catering Mark with a further five engaged with the Food for Life programme. This means that one in 3 primary schools in Scotland now serve Catering Mark certified meals to children (details of the programme's progress across Scotland are detailed in appendix 2).

### Edinburgh Food for Life Pilot Project

- 3.4 In November 2012, the Council agreed to work with NHS Lothian and the University of Edinburgh to pilot the Food for Life Catering Mark in selected sites.
- 3.5 Three pilots in Edinburgh have attained the bronze standard, including two Council schools; Currie High and Buckstone Primary along with the Council-run Clovenstone Care Home. The University of Edinburgh has the bronze award in all its public catered sites and food served to students at Pollock Halls of Residence. NHS Lothian continues to explore achieving the Catering Mark within hospitals and has also invited Soil Association Scotland to sit on its Catering Strategy Steering Group, to help inform the long term structure of the catering service.

- 3.6 The pilot project is funded until summer 2015 and work is underway in the Council towards achieving a silver award in the pilot schools to ensure this is achieved by the end of the pilot project.

Progress made to date towards the roll out

- 3.7 To deliver the Food for Life standard for the city's schools, a steering group is in place, supported by the Soil Association Scotland. A project manager is in place and plans are progressing positively.

Action Plan Rationale – Menu Conversion

- 3.8 Experience from the Edinburgh pilot project, Food for Life projects elsewhere in the UK and from comparable initiatives (e.g. Copenhagen House of Food) indicate that the key to rolling out a programme such as the Food for Life Catering Mark without incurring additional ongoing revenue costs is menu conversion.

- 3.9 Menu conversion is a key control measure for accreditation. It involves the following:-

- more local and freshly prepared ingredients (rather than processed foods).
- more seasonal fruit and vegetables, working with contracted suppliers to increase the produce coming direct from local farms.
- more and different uses of breads, grains and potatoes.
- eating less but better quality meat, using different cuts or cooking it in different ways, (e.g. North Ayrshire Council introduced a “meat free” day).
- good housekeeping: enhancing cooking skills and techniques to ensure more efficient use of energy and water, and producing less waste.

Action Plan - Further Detail

- 3.10 A cross service roll out working group has been established to lead on the operational changes needed to meet the standards.
- 3.11 The roll out working group is working to a plan (timeline attached, see appendix 3) for all Council schools, including primary, secondary and special schools to achieve the Food for Life bronze Catering Mark by April 2015, with pilot schools achieving a minimum of silver at the same time. The pilot, which is funded until July 2015, will be reviewed prior to its end in order to inform potential progression to the silver/gold standard across all Council schools thereafter.
- 3.12 The Food for Life Programme supports a “whole school approach”, whereby food education is developed alongside the school food service, meeting curriculum requirements and helping to ensure that children of all ages learn more about where food comes from, the importance of a healthy diet, and can relate this to the food they eat at school. It is closely aligned with initiatives such as Eco-Schools.

- 3.13 Using the knowledge gained through piloting the Food for Life bronze standards at Currie High School, menu development is underway to ensure the city's secondary schools are able to achieve the Food for Life Catering Mark whilst still offering a varied and attractive menu to Edinburgh's young people. There are plans to be more innovative in what pupils are offered in secondary schools to promote a continued increase in uptake whilst meeting customer needs in terms of speed of service, dining provision and the types of food served. The aim is to develop a simple, good value and high quality school catering service across Edinburgh, where everybody recognises that the best choice for lunch is a school meal.
- 3.14 The roll out working group will ensure appropriate levels of catering staff skills are in place to meet the requirements of the standards within established budgets wherever possible, by developing a suitable training schedule.
- 3.15 The roll-out working group will continue to work with procurement staff to ensure that relevant Council food and catering contracts include a standard specification for a minimum Food for Life bronze Catering Mark standard. The main requirements in this regard are UK Farm Assured meat and the absence of particular undesirable additives, GM produce and trans-fats, as well as seasonal produce wherever possible. The full list of Bronze Food for Life Catering Mark standards is detailed in appendix 1.
- 3.16 The recent increase in Scottish local authority demand for produce which meets Food for Life standards has led to Scotland Excel carrying out contract reviews. It is expected that economies of scale on a national level should further assist with ensuring best value for the Council.
- 3.17 It is considered that good planning, management and operational systems present the best opportunity to achieve Food for Life accreditation by balancing cost increases in one area against savings in another. This is further enhanced by the Council's involvement in Food for Life Scotland's Menu Advisory Panel, a national network of school cooks aiming to develop a suite of healthy, appealing and cost effective recipes for schools across Scotland which the Council's menu development staff will have access to.
- 3.18 Communication is a key element of the roll out's success. Parents, pupils, teachers and the wider community are being informed of the changes to the school food service, to help them understand why the changes are being made and to encourage them to engage with the process. Catering staff are being informed what is expected of them, including how to produce the meals that meet the standards. Some of this communication is underway, with a full briefing made to kitchen supervisors during April 2014 and a Cook's Network being established, comprising a group of Council catering staff to share ideas to support ongoing improvements. One of the key new tools being developed to support communication relating to school food is to publish photographs of all dishes so that pupils, parents and cooks are fully aware of how they should

appear. Pupil and parent engagement will also be assisted with information leaflets, posters, etc.

## Measures of success

---

- 4.1 All Council schools receive the Bronze Food for Life Catering Mark award by April 2015, demonstrating the Council's provision of high quality, freshly prepared and healthy food to the city's children and young people.
- 4.2 Pilot schools (Currie High and Buckstone Primary) achieve the silver Catering Mark award by April 2015.
- 4.3 Uptake continues to increase across Council schools.

## Financial impact

---

- 5.1 All financial requirements of achieving and maintaining Food for Life Bronze Catering Mark within Council schools are expected to be met within existing budgets.
- 5.3 An annual inspection is required to maintain Food for Life accreditation for each individual catering operation or group of operations. Currently the Local Authority fee for this is £995 (ex. VAT).
- 5.5 Where further inspections are required to provide evidence that the standards are in place in different settings, for example where different menus, procurement processes and training methods apply (such as within PPP schools or in non-school settings such as care homes) a further fee applies to cover the costs of the inspection and certification process. The relevant catering provider will be expected to cover this cost.
- 5.6 There may be further financial implications for the wider Catering Improvement Programme such as investment to increase the capacity of the service (kitchens and dining areas), equipment, furniture etc. to ensure adequate provision of a high quality free and paid-for school meal service that meets demand. This will be reported to the relevant Committee for approval at the appropriate time.
- 5.7 There may also be financial implications arising from moving towards silver and gold standards for all schools once bronze is achieved. These will be calculated using data gathered from the pilot work at Currie High and Buckstone Primary Schools and submitted to the relevant committee once available.

## Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

---

- 6.1 None identified.

## Equalities impact

---

- 7.1 Food for Life Scotland is embarking on a comprehensive evaluation programme, to commence shortly and to be completed by the end of 2014. This will include some research into the impact on equalities. Alongside the local evaluation work being conducted to support the pilot, this will provide more insight into the equalities impact of achieving the Food for Life Catering Mark award – which are expected to include greater equality in the health and wellbeing, the knowledge of food issues and a range of other metrics among pupils with different backgrounds and from different areas of the city.

## Sustainability impact

---

- 8.1 As detailed above, Food for Life Scotland is embarking on a comprehensive evaluation programme, to commence shortly and to be completed by the end of 2014. This will include some research into the impact on sustainability. Alongside the local evaluation work being conducted to support the pilot, this will provide more insight into the sustainability impact of achieving the Food for Life Catering Mark award. This is expected to include carbon reduction, reduced pollution and greater biodiversity on the farms used to source food for Edinburgh's schools.

## Consultation and engagement

---

- 9.1 Consultation with all stakeholders is ongoing. A communications and engagement plan forms a core part of the project plan which includes mechanisms to gather feedback on an ongoing basis from all parties affected by the programme including schools, cooks, parents, pupils and the wider community.

## Background reading / external references

---

Better Eating Better Learning Report - [www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0044/00445740.pdf](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0044/00445740.pdf)

Food for Life Catering Mark Standards - [www.sacert.org/catering/standards](http://www.sacert.org/catering/standards)

## John Bury

Acting Director of Services for Communities

Contact: Jim Davidson, Corporate Facilities Manager

E-mail: [jim.davidson@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:jim.davidson@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 5233

## Links

---

<b>Coalition pledges</b>	P43 – Invest in healthy living and fitness advice for those most in needs.
<b>Council outcomes</b>	C010 – Improved health and reduced inequalities. CO15 – The public is protected.
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b>	S02 – Edinburgh citizens experience improved health and well-being, with reduced inequalities in health.
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix 1 - Food for Life Catering Mark Standards. Appendix 2 - Food for Life Catering Mark in Scottish Schools – Progress (April 2014). Appendix 3 – CEC Food for Life Bronze Catering Mark for all Schools.



## Appendix 1

### Food for Life Catering Mark Standards

#### **Bronze Standards**

- Meals contain no undesirable food additives or hydrogenated fats
- 75% of dishes are freshly prepared
- Meat is from farms which satisfy UK welfare standards
- Eggs are from cage-free hens
- Menus are seasonal
- Training is provided for all catering staff
- No GM ingredients are used
- Free drinking water is prominently available
- No fish are served from the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) 'fish to avoid' list
- Information is on display about food provenance
- All suppliers have been verified to ensure they apply appropriate food safety standards
- Caterers in schools, early years and residential care settings can demonstrate their compliance with national standards or guidelines on nutrition
- Menus provide for all dietary and cultural needs.

#### **Silver and gold Standards**

Whilst meeting all bronze Standards, the silver and gold standards are assessed on a points system, and recognise caterers making step by step progress to further improve the food they serve.

Food providers are rewarded for every percentage of their ingredient spend on **ethical** and **environmentally friendly** food, **locally sourced** ingredients and steps to offer **healthier menus**.

Within silver Catering Mark menus, 5% of the total spend on a menu must be on organic produce. At gold, this figure rises to 15%.

To see the standards for each level in further detail: [www.sacert.org/catering/standards](http://www.sacert.org/catering/standards)

## Appendix 2

### Food for Life Catering Mark in Scottish Schools – Progress (April 2014)

1. [City of Edinburgh Council](#) has the bronze Catering Mark for both [Currie High School](#) and [Buckstone Primary School](#), serving around 170 meals per day across the two schools.
2. [North Ayrshire Council](#) has the gold Catering Mark for their primary school meals service across 53 primary schools and their school meals service in 1 secondary school, collectively serving around 5,500 meals per day
3. [East Ayrshire Council](#) has the gold Catering Mark for their primary school meals service which serves around 3,000 meals per day across 39 primary schools
4. [Highland Council](#) has the bronze Catering Mark for their primary school meals service which serves around 9,000 meals per day across 177 primary schools
5. [Stirling Council](#) has the silver Catering Mark for their primary school meals service which serves around 2,000 meals per day across 37 primary schools and 5 nurseries.
6. [South Lanarkshire Council](#) has the bronze Catering Mark for its 124 Primary schools and 5 of its nursery schools, serving 12,441 meals each day across all sites
7. [East Lothian Council](#) has the bronze Catering Mark for their primary school meal service which serves around 2,770 meals per day across 35 primary schools
8. [Fife Council](#) has the bronze Catering Mark for their primary school meal service which serves around 11,000 meals per day across 144 primary schools
9. [Argyll and Bute Council](#) has the bronze Catering Mark for their school meals service across 75 Primary Schools, serving 2,858 meals per day

### Appendix 3

#### City of Edinburgh Council - Food for Life Bronze Catering Mark in all Schools – Project Timeline

