

# Education, Children & Families Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday, 6 October 2015

## Food for Life Accreditation in Edinburgh's Schools - Update

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|-------------------|-----------|
| Item number       | 7.12      |
| Report number     |           |
| Executive/routine | Executive |
| Wards             | All       |

### Executive summary

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At its meeting on 20 May 2014, the Education, Children and Families Committee considered a report "Food for Life Accreditation in Edinburgh's Schools", and noted plans to roll-out Food for Life across all Council run and Public Private Partnership (PPP) Schools, to attain Bronze Catering Mark accreditation by April 2015.

This report provides Education, Children and Families Committee with a progress update on achieving the Food for Life Accreditation in the city's schools.

### Links

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|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 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 - Update

### Recommendations

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That Committee:-

- 1.1 Notes that the Food for Life programme has been successfully rolled out across all Council Schools, including PPP1 and PPP2 schools, with the Bronze Catering Mark accreditation awarded in December 2014;
- 1.2 Notes that the Food for Life Catering Mark achievement has been attained in conjunction with the introduction of Free School Meals for pupils in Primary 1-3 classes, which commenced in January 2015;
- 1.3 Notes that the Food for Life roll-out is in alignment with the Scottish Government's *Better Eating, Better Learning* report and contributes to fulfilling the Council's commitment to the *Edible Edinburgh* Sustainable Food City Plan; and
- 1.4 Confirms the commitment proposed in the "Trust In The Food We Eat" Report to Council on 30 May 2013, to roll-out the Soil Association Scotland's Food for Life, to attain the Bronze Catering Mark accreditation across all the other production kitchen operations, by summer 2016.

### Background

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- 2.1 Edible Edinburgh is a sub-group of the Edinburgh Sustainable Development Partnership, one of the cross-cutting partnerships, established within community planning structures, under the Edinburgh Partnership.
- 2.2 The Edinburgh Food for Life Partnership (EFFLP), a sub group of Edible Edinburgh, was established in 2012 to progress public sector leadership in sustainable food procurement and catering in the city. EFFLP involves the City of Edinburgh Council, NHS Lothian and the University of Edinburgh, investigating new opportunities for public sector procurement, and in applying the Food for Life Catering Mark framework, within their respective procurement and catering operations.
- 2.3 Funded by the Scottish Government, the Soil Association's Food for Life Scotland programme works to transform food culture in Scotland, enabling everyone to enjoy nutritious, seasonal and sustainable meals. This work is helping to address some of our nation's most pressing issues concerning health

and wellbeing, the economy and the environment. A key element of Food for Life Scotland's work is the Food for Life Catering Mark award.

- 2.4 The Food for Life Catering Mark award is an independent endorsement that caterers are taking steps to serve fresher, more seasonal menus, which are free from undesirable additives and trans-fats, are better for animal welfare, and comply with a number of standards, as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 2.5 In November 2012, the Council agreed to work with NHS Lothian, and the University of Edinburgh, to pilot the Food for Life Catering Mark within three selected sites. Currie Community High School and Buckstone Primary School were selected as pilot schools, to test the Catering Mark standards and explore how to engage pupils and the wider school community on food issues, with Clovenstone Care Home being selected as the third site.
- 2.6 All three sites achieved a Bronze Catering Mark award in June 2013, with both schools creating a benchmark for other Edinburgh schools to follow.
- 2.7 At its meeting on 30 May 2013, Council considered a report "Trust In The Food We Eat" when it was agreed that the roll out of the pilot would be accelerated to commit to expanding the Food for Life Catering Mark standard across all Councils catering operations, starting with schools.
- 2.8 A further report to the Education, Children and Families Committee in March 2014, "Food for Life Accreditation in Edinburgh's Schools", detailed progress towards achieving the Food for Life Bronze Catering Mark certification in all the city's schools, and committed to achieve a Silver Award in the two pilot schools. A further update was requested on progress, which is the purpose of this report.

## Main report

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### **Food for Life - Bronze Catering Mark Award**

- 3.1 In December 2014, the City of Edinburgh Council became the first local authority in Scotland to achieve the Bronze Catering Mark Award across all its primary, secondary and special schools. This was as a result of some key menu and product changes, including a switch to farm assured meat. The achievement includes PPP1 and PPP2 schools, catered by Amey and Chartwells respectively, in addition to the Council's in-house catering service. Three Council-run care homes also hold the award. As well as the City of Edinburgh Council, 10 other Local Authorities in Scotland have achieved the Food for Life Catering Mark, with more than 100,000 Catering Mark meals served each day across Scotland, as detailed in Appendix 2.
- 3.2 A cross-departmental Food for Life Roll-out Working Group has been leading on the programme in relation to Edinburgh's schools since January 2014, with direct support from Soil Association Scotland. The group forms part of the Catering Improvement Programme, and has worked to implement the standards across the catering service to achieve the Bronze award.

### **Edible Edinburgh & Better Eating, Better Learning**

- 3.3 In June 2014, the Council agreed to endorse and support the “Edible Edinburgh Sustainable Food City Plan”, and to play a key role in implementing the plan and to directly progress actions where required.
- 3.4 One of the six key aims of the plan to ensure sustainable procurement is “To develop a thriving local food economy based on public and private sector businesses procuring more sustainable food” with Major Objectives to “support ongoing delivery for the Edinburgh Food for Life Partnership Project”, “Improve the amount & quality of sustainable food procured” and “Establish better communication and links between producers, processors, retailers and customers”.
- 3.5 Another aim of the plan is “To create fair and affordable access to sustainable food, and ensure people can use it to provide a fresh, healthy and nutritious diet” with the Major Objective to “Increase consumption of nutritious fruit and vegetables.”

### **Expansion of Edinburgh Food for Life**

- 3.6 Whilst this report provides an update on the achievement of attaining a Bronze Catering Mark accreditation within all of Edinburgh’s schools, it is important to reflect the position of this work within a wider strategic context.
- 3.7 The Report to Council “Trust In The Food We Eat” on 30 May 2013, made a commitment to roll out the Soil Association Scotland’s Food for Life Catering Mark standard across all Council catering operations in a phased programme, starting with the Council’s schools. Therefore, cognisance must be taken to acknowledge that establishing the Bronze Award within schools is the first phase of a programme, and the same Bronze Catering Mark standard should be attained at all production kitchen operations.
- 3.8 It is essential that the Bronze Standard, within the School Catering Service, is permitted sufficient time to consolidate and embed into the day to day running of the service. The annual inspection will provide an opportunity to monitor and reflect on the benefits of the implementation of the Catering Mark Bronze Award and consider future progress.
- 3.9 In the meantime, it is proposed to roll-out the Bronze standard to all other production kitchen operations, as the next phase. Attainment will be targeted for summer 2016, in time for the annual review by the Soil Association.

### **Edinburgh Food for Life - Silver Award Pilot**

- 3.10 Following the Bronze Catering Mark award in June 2013 for the two pilot schools, Currie Community High School and Buckstone Primary School in June 2013, both schools have been working to develop a “good food culture”, conducting a range of food-related learning activities. For CCHS this work is being led by the Food for Life Action Group (FLAG), which involves pupils,

teachers, school management, the catering team and Food for Life Scotland. CCHS has also become a Food for Life Scotland “pathfinder school”, one of 24 schools in Scotland prioritising food learning and developing a whole school approach to food.

- 3.11 The Food for Life Roll-out Working Group continues to work directly with the kitchen at CCHS, as well as with suppliers regarding availability and suitability of products, towards meeting the Silver criteria in the pilot schools, as one of the key differences between Bronze and Silver is that 5% of the menu spend, must be on organic produce, as detailed in Appendix 3.
- 3.12 Both CCHS and Buckstone Primary School are actively working towards the Silver Catering Mark Award. The progress on attaining the Silver Standard within the Pilot Schools will continue to be monitored and, once achieved, the information gathered will be used to benchmark the potential costs, and any other implication of delivering the Silver Catering Mark Award, across the Council school estate.

## Measures of success

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- 4.1 The Council's catering services currently provide approximately 13,500 hot meals each day, Monday to Thursday, with a cold service provided on Friday's half school day. Uptake in the numbers of hot school meals continues to increase, with the delivery of 730,657 meals recorded during the months of November 2014 to February 2015, which is an increase of over 129,781 meals on the 600,876 served during November 2013 to March 2014. An average of approximately 7,260 packed lunches have been provided each Friday, based on figures collated during the months of January, February and the first three weeks of March this year.
- 4.2 Whilst these statistics demonstrate an increased delivery of over 21%, these figures cannot be solely attributed to Food for Life, as the introduction of Free School Meals followed very closely, commencing in January 2015, and an increase in school role numbers, makes it difficult to accurately assess the impact of Food for Life alone.
- 4.3 Quality surveys have been developed by the Catering Improvement Programme to gather feedback on a range of measures, many of which could identify areas for improvement within the service over the coming months. The surveys have been distributed in the first instance to school Head Teachers and Business Managers.
- 4.4 It is the intention to distribute quality surveys to Parents, Pupils and Catering Personnel, as part of an ongoing drive to monitor quality across the catering service, and improve as necessary.
- 4.5 Feedback will be collated and recommendations communicated to all stakeholders to maintain and embed the Food for Life standards, and ensure

that the service can achieve its ambition to provide every pupil the choice of a high quality, nutritious and fresh meal whilst at school.

- 4.6 Additional funding was provided, by the Council's Corporate Policy and Strategy Team in October 2014, to run an innovative "Food for Life Champions" peer-learning project, whereby three of the city's skilled and enthusiastic cooks visited all the other kitchens and dining centres to learn and share best practice in line with Food for Life Catering Mark principles and standards. This additional resource has allowed closer monitoring of the Food for Life Catering Mark standards from October 2014 - March 2015 and will lead to a clearer understanding of quality within the service.

## Financial impact

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- 5.1 Now that the Food for Life Bronze Catering Mark Award has been in place for all schools for a full quarter, it can be reported that no noticeable increase in food costs have been observed as a result of its introduction.
- 5.2 The financial implications of moving towards the Silver Catering Mark Award are currently being calculated using a range of data, including historical spend data within the catering service, as well as pricing information from suppliers. Where necessary, alternative products are being identified that would meet the Silver standards. In order to inform this process, a "real-life" organic vegetable trial was conducted in March 2015, involving a local organic farm and the Council's contracted vegetable supplier. The trial, which involved several meetings and a farm visit, is intended to ensure that all the necessary, logistical arrangements are in place and that costs can be more accurately calculated.
- 5.3 There are also plans to look further at re-developing menus to reduce the impact of increased prices for more sustainable and ethical produce, which is an approach taken by other Local Authorities. The results of these trials and other initiatives are being collated and will be reported once available.
- 5.4 January 2015 saw the introduction of Free School Meals to pupils in Primary 1-3 classes. This, along with the newly rolled out Food for Life Catering Mark award, presented various challenges including, re-opening school kitchens; kitchen alterations; purchasing additional equipment; dining centre alterations; capacity issues; and recruitment of staff, all within a very tight timescale, and at an investment of approximately £3M. The Catering Improvement Board, working with Children and Families, FM, Asset Strategy and the Building Programme Team, oversaw this work, and initial indications suggest it went smoothly, with very few negative comments from schools or parents.
- 5.5 An annual inspection is required to maintain Food for Life Accreditation for each individual catering operation or group of operations. The Local Authority fee for this is currently £995 (ex. VAT).

- 5.6 Where further inspections are required, to evidence that the standards are in place in respect of different settings, for example, where changes to menus, procurement processes and training methods apply, such as within PPP schools or in non-school settings such as care homes, a further fee will apply to cover the cost of the inspection and certification process. The relevant catering provider will be expected to cover this cost.

## **Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 6.1 None identified.

## **Equalities impact**

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- 7.1 The Food for Life Catering Mark supports one of the Soil Association's key principles: "Good Food for All", whereby everyone should have access to affordable good food. Providing good food in all of Edinburgh's schools, and teaching pupils about the importance of good food, has the potential to support greater equality. This is through both a better quality diet, as well as better knowledge of food issues among pupils with different backgrounds, and from different areas of the city.

## **Sustainability impact**

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- 8.1 Choosing to purchase more local and seasonal produce has the potential to support environmental and economic sustainability, even at Bronze level.
- 8.2 Moving up to the Silver award and increasing the amount of local, organic produce as a result, is expected to further benefit the sustainability of the Council's school food service, with reduced use of pesticides and fertilisers, and greater biodiversity on some of the farms used to source food for Edinburgh's schools, as well as lowering the overall transport emissions.

## **Consultation and engagement**

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- 9.1 Communication is a key element to the success of the Food for Life Catering Mark award, particularly in terms of increasing uptake and embedding standards, and all schools have recently been issued with Food for Life promotional packs, to help them communicate to pupils, teachers and parents / guardians that the award is in place, and to encourage them to use the service.
- 9.2 The Food for Life Roll-out Working Group will continue to work with all associated groups, to inform and update them about the Food for Life programme. Ongoing consultation with stakeholders will continue.
- 9.3 The catering service will continue to provide seasonal menus, which change twice yearly, in line with the seasons, with the latest menu featuring a section about the Bronze standard. Briefing sessions will be held with catering supervisory staff, where full menu / recipe information packs are provided with

opportunities to share and discuss new initiatives to support the ongoing improvements of the service.

- 9.4 Mechanisms to gather feedback is ongoing and, as detailed in Measures of Success, all parties associated with, or affected by, the Food for Life initiative, including schools, catering staff, parents, pupils and the wider community, will be consulted.

## Background reading / external references

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Better Eating Better Learning - [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)

Edible Edinburgh: A Sustainable Food City Plan - [www.edible-edinburgh.org](http://www.edible-edinburgh.org)

Soil Association Scotland - [www.soilassociation.org/scotland](http://www.soilassociation.org/scotland)

Trust in the Food We Eat - [report by SfC to full Council on 30/5/13, 'Trust in the Food We Eat'](#)

Education, Children & Families Committee: Business Bulletin - 3 March 2015

[www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/46296/item\\_61\\_-\\_business\\_bulletin](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/46296/item_61_-_business_bulletin).

Education, Children & Families Committee: Report - 20 May 2014

[http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/43180/item\\_710\\_-\\_food\\_for\\_life\\_accreditation\\_in\\_edinburgh\\_schools](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/43180/item_710_-_food_for_life_accreditation_in_edinburgh_schools)

## John Bury

Acting Director of Services for Communities

Contact: Helen Allan, Acting Corporate Facilities Manager

E-mail: [helen.allan@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:helen.allan@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 4530

## Links

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|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Coalition pledges</b>        | P43 - Invest in healthy living and fitness advice for those most in need.   |
| <b>Council outcomes</b>         | C010 - Improved health and reduced inequalities.<br>C015 - The public is protected.   |
| <b>Single Outcome Agreement</b> | S02 - Edinburgh citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health.   |
| <b>Appendices</b>               | Appendix 1 - Food for Life Catering Mark Standards.<br>Appendix 2 - Food for Life Catering Mark in Scottish Local Authority Schools - April 2015.<br>Appendix 3 - Example of FFL Promotional Artwork.(to be attached) |



## **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 Local Authority Schools - April 2015**

1. City of Edinburgh Council has the bronze Catering Mark for all its schools, serving approximately 13,250 meals each day.
2. Aberdeenshire Council has the bronze Catering Mark for their primary school meals service serving 10,500 meals per day.
3. Argyll and Bute Council has the bronze Catering Mark for their school meals service across 75 Primary Schools, serving 2,858 meals per day
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. East Renfrewshire Council has the bronze Catering Mark for their primary school meal service, serving 4,200 meals per day.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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
10. 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.
11. 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.

## Appendix 3

### Food for Life - Progressing from Bronze



#### Bronze Standards

The Bronze Catering Mark Standards are focus on removing harmful additives, GM ingredients and trans-fats from the menu and ensuring that the majority of food is prepared freshly on site.



#### Silver & Gold Standards

The Silver and Gold Catering Mark Standards are assessed on a points system, where food providers are rewarded for every percentage point of their ingredient spend on ethical and environmentally sustainable food, locally sourced ingredients and steps taken to offer healthier menus.

To achieve the Silver and Gold Catering Mark Standards, you must firstly demonstrate that you meet all of the Bronze Standards.



#### To achieve the Silver Catering Mark:

A total of 150 points must be attained by:

- Spending at least 5% of your total ingredient budget on organic produce **(25 points)**
- Sourcing ethical and environmentally sustainable food, such as, organic, MSC, free range, MCS 'fish to eat', Freedom Food, Fairtrade or LEAF **(15 points)**
- Taking action from the "making healthy eating easy" steps **(20 points)**
- Collecting another 90 points from any of the three categories **(90 points)**