

Education, Children and Families Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 13 December 2016

Schools Meals Update

Item number	8.4
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	

Executive Summary

This report provides an annual update on the school meals service and progress updates on Food for Life (FFL) Accreditation and online school payments.

Links

[Coalition Pledges](#)
[Council Priorities](#)
[Single Outcome Agreement](#)

School Meals Update

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Committee:
- 1.1.1 notes the content of this report and the successful delivery of additional accommodation space in four schools to facilitate implementation of extended entitlement to free school meals to all P1 to P3 pupils;
 - 1.1.2 notes the successful retention of Food for Life (FFL) Bronze catering mark across the school estate; and
 - 1.1.3 notes achieving Silver FFL Catering Mark in two City of Edinburgh FM Catering pilot schools; Currie Community High School and Buckstone Primary.

2. Background

- 2.1 On [19 May 2015](#) Committee requested:
- 2.1.1 An annual progress report on the school meals service; and
 - 2.1.2 That a feasibility and associated timescales of implementing an on-line payments system for school meals be included in the annual progress report.
- 2.2 On [6 October 2016](#) Committee requested a progress update on financial implications arising from moving towards FFL accreditation silver and gold standards once bronze was achieved.
- 2.3 This report provides the annual progress report and addresses the additional request for information. The assessment has to be taken in the context of the unprecedented event of having to accommodate for an additional 7,000 pupils within the existing estate during the PPP decant.

3. Main report

School Meals Uptake

- 3.1 The Scottish Governments annual Healthy Living Survey is undertaken on one day during February or March each calendar year for primary, secondary and special schools with the results showing comparative data across all Scottish Local

Authorities. 2016 data was collected during week commencing 22 February 2016 and results were published on the 27 June 2016.

- 3.2 The table below shows a comparison of uptake levels between 2015 and 2016 for primary 1 to 3, primary 4 to 7 and secondary schools. There has been a small increase in uptake across each stage.

% present, taking (Free & Paid)		
	2015	2016
P1-3	80	84
P4-7	42.2	42.4
Secondary	21.3	22.7

Volume meals served daily (Sept 2016)	
Primary	15,505
Secondary	2,095
Special	455

- 3.3 Due to the extension of eligibility for free school meals to all P1 to P3 pupils in January 2015, and the resulting significant increase in meal uptake within these year groups, drawing comparisons between years prior to 2015 would be misleading.
- 3.4 The Scottish Governments annual Healthy Living Survey can be used in order to illustrate school meal uptake across Edinburgh schools and the following table draws comparisons with other Scottish Local Authorities.

% present, taking (Free & Paid)			
	Scotland av.	Large Urban Av.	Edinburgh
P1-3	81.7	77.5	84
P4-7	53.7	48.9	42.4
Secondary	45.8	34	22.7

- 3.5 Although secondary meal uptake has increased slightly from 2015 to 2016 this table shows our secondary uptakes are low in comparison to the Scottish average, even when comparing with other Large Urban authorities. Specific resource has been targeted in this area to address the imbalance as detailed later in this report.

Increasing Accommodation Space for Free School Meals P1-P3

- 3.6 The need for significant additional accommodation space at four schools was detailed in a report to Committee on [9 December 2014](#).
- 3.7 Funding was secured from Scottish Government for four schools; Cramond, East Craig's, Sciennes and Towerbank Primary schools where the need for significant additional physical space was identified.
- 3.8 Extensions have now been completed at all four schools:
- Sciennes additional dining hall completed August 2016;
 - Cramond gym hall completed October 2016;
 - East Craig's gym hall completed October 2016; and
 - Towerbank dining hall extension completed October 2016.

Secondary School Service

- 3.9 As the census figures illustrate, uptake of meals in Edinburgh Secondary Schools is relatively low. In order to increase uptake pupil consultation has been carried out and a number of initiatives have been introduced.
- 3.10 Focus Groups were carried out at James Gillespie's, Portobello and Boroughmuir High schools prior to the design of the new dining and service areas. These identified issues with service style, food choices and presentation with ideas and recommendations in order to meet their expectations and encourage use of the service. Various ideas from these groups have been incorporated into the design of the new build high schools such as multiple service points, self service counters and cafe areas.
- 3.11 Initial feedback on the new service style at both James Gillespie's and Portobello is very positive with number of pupils using the service increasing.
- 3.12 Pupil surveys and branding workshops were held with pupil groups and a new brand created for the secondary service. This brand was developed using key themes identified by pupils in terms of colour, humour, sustainability, food provenance and animal welfare. Although a consistent brand has been created for in the secondary catering estate, each school will have input to naming the area to ensure each is relevant to the individual school and encourage engagement with pupils.
- 3.13 From pupil feedback and consultation on the food provision in secondary schools, new products are being explored and tasting sessions have been carried out at a number of schools including Portobello, Boroughmuir, Queensferry, Liberton, Castlebrae and Currie High schools. Many of these products and new food concepts have proved popular and are being introduced to the menus. This process will continue to ensure that the interest of pupils is maintained and healthier choices are promoted.

- 3.14 Pupils pay for school meals in secondary schools using IMPACT, a cashless catering system.
- 3.15 The current cashless catering system across the Council and PPP1 estate requires upgrading as much of the hardware is no longer functioning effectively and has now been discontinued. One of the major issues with the current system is the reliance on the One Edinburgh card, which is used to load credit to pupils cashless catering accounts and pay for meals. Pupils tend to lose their cards and are therefore unable to access the school meals service so choose to leave the school grounds at lunch time.
- 3.16 A new cashless catering system has been specified within the three wave three high schools; James Gillespie's, Portobello and Boroughmuir. These have the ability to use pin numbers or biometrics instead of the One card to pay for meals. Biometrics has been introduced at Portobello High school and this is proving popular with pupils as it increases the speed of service and reduces queuing time.
- 3.17 A review of the existing cashless catering system across the rest of the estate is underway with a view to upgrading the hardware and software in line with the new schools. An upgrade is also required to enable integration with Online Payments for schools.

Online Payments

- 3.18 Following a tender process, ParentPay is the new Online Payments system which will enable parents to pay for lunches, trips and other items securely by credit or debit card. The rollout has now commenced on a phased basis.
- 3.19 All schools will be advised of their proposed roll out dates by the end of November and rollout should be complete by the end of the session (June 2017) for over 140 primary, secondary, special and early years establishments.

Food for Life Accreditation

- 3.20 A report to Committee on [6 October 2015](#) provided a progress update on achieving FFL accreditation in the city's schools.
- 3.21 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 achieved by all three catering providers; Council FM Catering, AMEY (PPP 1 schools) and Chartwells (PPP 2 schools).
- 3.22 In April 2016, the Bronze Award was retained for a third consecutive year in all schools by all three catering providers.
- 3.23 Also, in April 2016, the Council FM Catering pilot schools, Currie High and Buckstone Primary, achieved the Silver Catering Mark Award. We are monitoring these schools in terms of uptake, costs and customer feedback.

Food for Life Development work

- 3.24 The Council FM Catering team are actively involved in FFL across Scotland attending network meetings, menu development and sharing best practice with other councils and organisations.
- 3.25 FM Catering have delivered presentations sharing best practice and our experiences of FFL in Edinburgh to other Councils including:
- Achieving the Bronze catering mark in secondary schools;
 - Secondary school development; pupil consultation, taster sessions, branding;
 - FFL Education Framework; presentation delivered to schools from other Council's from both a catering and education perspective (Currie High School); and
 - Sharing our experience of FFL with other organisations and contract caterers from Universities, Colleges and Scottish Parliament.
- 3.26 FFL Scotland has developed an Education Framework to help schools deliver a whole school approach to food in schools. FM Catering have hosted four sessions with FFL Scotland for school staff to promote the service and demonstrate how catering can support food education in schools and deliver on the Scottish Governments [Better Eating, Better Learning](#) document.
- 3.27 Inch View Care Home has recently been awarded Most Innovative Partnership by [Alzheimer's Scotland](#) for their partnership with Liberton High School. This work has grown out of the Edinburgh FFL Partnership where both the school catering service and the care home hold the FFL Catering Mark Award. Links were made between the two sites and a number of activities have taken place. This partnership has grown; opening up a number of opportunities for all involved and demonstrates what can be achieved through food. Details of this project can be found on the [Food for Life Scotland](#) website.

Better Eating, Better Learning

- 3.28 Better Eating, Better Learning (BEBL) sets the agenda for improving food education in Scotland and is included within Education Scotland school inspections.
- 3.29 This resource has a self evaluation toolkit which the Council has reviewed from both a catering and education perspective. A workshop was held with all three catering providers to create a picture of where we are now and develop an action plan. A similar exercise was carried out with schools by combining responses from across primary, secondary and special schools.
- 3.30 Next steps identified by carrying out the self evaluation included sessions for catering staff and school staff where peers can share best practice.
- 3.31 Delivering on BEBL requires caterers and schools to work in partnership to develop a whole school approach to food in schools. The document is broken down into seven key areas for action; food and health, food and learning, school food and

drink provision, the dining experience, sustainability through food, training and support and communication and engagement.

3.32 Many of these areas for action are already imbedded within food education work carried out within schools and the procurement and delivery of school meals. Work is ongoing and continues to develop and support the key areas for action, some examples of this are:

- Seasonal menus;
- Promoting food provenance, self serve salad bars, parent cooking sessions;
- Adhering to the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) Act (Scotland) 2007;
- Promoting food waste management and recycling, changes to service style in secondary schools, extensions to dining halls, pupil feedback on experience;
- Procurement of local and sustainable food sources. Working in partnership with others departments to deliver on Learning for Sustainability;
- Sharing best practice within and across peer groups through FFL Learning community twilight sessions; and
- Updates to the Council's website on menus, information to schools for newsletters, attending parents evenings and taster sessions, presentations at school assemblies.

3.33 As the council's main FFL pilot school, Currie High School have worked hard to develop a whole school approach to food with food embedded within school life. For example, catering staff at Currie High School uploaded a video to YouTube in response to the online 'dance off' during the summer. This has been picked up by STV and a clip will be featured on an upcoming dance off programme: Ashley Banjos Steal the Show. The whole school community has been supportive of this generating great excitement and featured on the Currie High School [website](#) . They have now received a special request from the school to produce a special Christmas dance.

Edible Edinburgh

3.34 Edible Edinburgh is a cross sector group which has developed the Edible Edinburgh Sustainable Food City Plan following city wide consultation. The plan is a tool to help Edinburgh develop as a sustainable food city. It recognises a cultural shift to deliver healthier, fresh and sustainable food is produced, that fewer people live in poverty and our natural environment is protected.

3.35 Procurement is one strand in the plan and is considered when awarding contracts with the following aims:

- To develop a thriving local food economy based on public and private sector businesses procuring more sustainable food;
- Improve the amount of sustainable food procured;

- Establish better communication and links between producers, processors, retailers and customers;
 - Support ongoing delivery of the Edinburgh Food for Life Partnership project; and
 - Expanding catering mark in settings beyond schools and care homes.
- 3.36 Next steps in the plan include achieving the Sustainable Food Cities Network Bronze award. Continuing to develop sustainable food procurement within the delivery of school meals provision will play an important role in this.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 The successful implementation of the revised policy with all children in P1 to P3 who wish to take up the option of a free school meal from January 2015. Additional space delivered to accommodate this.
- 4.2 The successful retention of the Bronze FFL Catering Mark across the school estate.
- 4.3 Achieving Silver FFL Catering Mark in two pilot schools; Currie High School and Buckstone Primary.

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 The cost of free schools meals is fully funded by the Scottish Government.
- 5.2 FFL Bronze award has been in place for four full menu cycles. As the initial implementation of the Bronze Award and Free School Meals P1 to P3 ran concurrently, it is difficult to separate associated costs.
- 5.3 FFL Silver has been in place for one full menu cycle in two pilot sites. Once two full menu cycles have been delivered, which constitutes a full year, seasonal variations in menu items and pricing can be considered. Historical spend data and pricing information from suppliers will then be used to provide a realistic assessment of any financial implication of implementing the Silver Catering Mark.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 None identified.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 There are no negative equality or human rights impacts arising from this report.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 Choosing to purchase more local and seasonal produce has the potential to support environmental and economic sustainability.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Consultation with pupils has been carried out to gather feedback and contribute to service development, details of this are outlined in this report.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Scottish Government Healthy Living Survey full report and statistics can be found at the following links:
- The publication with summary statistics is available at: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/06/4523>
 - Supplementary tables with summary statistics: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/leavedestla/follleavedestat/attainmentandleavers1415>
 - Supplementary tables at a Local Authority level: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/MealsSD/mealsped>
Supplementary tables at a School level: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education/SchoolMealsDatasets>

Hugh Dunn

Acting Executive Director of Resources

Laura Nisbet, Development Officer - Food and Health

E-mail: laura.nisbet@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 529 6728

11. Links

Coalition Pledges

Council Priorities

**Single Outcome
Agreement**

Appendices