

ANGUS COUNCIL

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

6 JUNE 2000

BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW – SCHOOL CATERING UPDATE

ABSTRACT

This report advises of the progress being made in the implementation of the School Catering Best Value Service Review Improvement Plan.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee note the content of this report.

2. BACKGROUND

Members will recall report number 75/99 "Best Value Service Review – School Catering" which was approved by the Education Committee at its meeting on 26 January 1999. The report contained an Improvement Plan (see Appendix) and this report provides details of progress in meeting the action plan contained in the report. Following the Service Review, the service was successfully re-launched by John Swinney MSP in April 1999, which acted as a catalyst to improve the service.

3. SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS:

A number of improvements have been made to the service which are outlined as follows:-

- Primary school menus were altered to take account of customer (ie pupil) preferences; these are more flexible than previous arrangements, allowing individual schools to include local choices on menus.
- Improved quality assurance arrangements have been put in place to ensure the service meets the required standard and indeed is continuously improved, eg. more focus on service outputs than inputs, seeking views of pupils, amending service to reflect local requirements etc.
- On a phased basis improvements have been made in service facilities including the introduction of higher quality service trolleys, crockery and cutlery and improved décor/layout in some dining areas.
- Cashless catering systems have been introduced in four secondary schools, and it is hoped to extend this to all secondary schools over the next 1-2 years. Improvements to the range of products available to pupils together with upgrading of service facilities have also been undertaken.
- Emphasis has been placed on healthy eating with incentives being given to primary and secondary pupils to select healthy choices. Six Angus primary schools and 2 Angus secondary schools have been nominated for H.E.B.S Healthy Choice Awards. If successful this scheme will be expanded to include other schools in Angus.
- Introduction of fun days linked where possible to the curriculum in primary schools.
- A School Catering Service Level Agreement has been prepared and agreed between the Education Department and Tayside Contracts (the service provider).

- Streamlined administrative arrangements have been introduced.

Prior to introducing these changes demand for school meals had been falling for a number of years. However, as a result of the improvements to the service, the number of meals consumed rose to 530,000 in primary schools and 387,000 in secondary schools in 1999/2000, an overall increase of 18% on the previous year.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As part of the Service Review revised financial arrangements were also agreed with Tayside Contracts. Even allowing for the significant increase in the number of pupils benefiting from the service, this has resulted in the overall cost to the council reducing, when compared to the previous arrangements. Assuming a constant price base, the budgeted cost of the service in 2000/01 has reduced by approximately £ 20,000 compared to 1999/2000.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Improvements to the school catering service have been effected. The Education Department in partnership with Tayside Contracts will strive to further improve the school catering service in accordance with the service improvement plan .

6. CONSULTATION

This report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance, the Director of Law & Administration and the Managing Director of Tayside Contracts.

JIM ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

SCHOOL CATERING ACTION/ IMPROVEMENT PLAN
Approved by the Education Committee of 26 January 1999

	Timescale	Comment
i) Primary Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire for Parents • Questionnaire for Pupils • Introduce Pilot Menus in 8 schools • Implement menus based in customer views (school survey) • Review success of revised menus • Revise menus in all schools 	July 98 October 98 October 98 January 99 Oct-March 99 April - Aug 99	Completed Completed Commenced
ii) Secondary Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake customer research • Invest in new technology (cashless system) • Improve decor and introduce new choice in Webster's High School • Based on results of survey and feedback from Webster's, roll out programme to other secondary schools on phased basis.* (3 schools in 1999/2000) • Monitor results of cashless system and if successful replicate in other schools (at same time as other improvements introduced). 	October 98 January 99 October 98 April 99 - March 2000 April 99 - March 2000	Completed Completed
iii) Specification and Quality Assurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Operating Procedures • Prepare Contractual Framework • Quality Assurance Guidelines • Implement New Arrangements • Relaunch the Service • Kitchen Quality Self Assessment 	October 98 October 98 October 98 Jan 99 April 99	Completed Completed Completed
iv) Customer Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare leaflet for parents on Healthy Eating • Introduce Healthy Eating Passport 	April 99 April 99	
v) Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce streamlined arrangements in Secondary Schools • Introduce streamlined arrangements in Primary Schools • Consider further streamlining, eg. collection of money (possibly as part of ABC process) 	August 98 Dec 98 April 99	Completed
vi) ABC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial stage (agree work programme) • Subsequent stages 	Nov 98 Aug 99	
vii) Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunchtime/Supervisor • Kitchen staff • Quality Assurance 	Feb 99 Aug 98-ongoing Nov 98	Commenced
viii) Financial Arrangements		

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce revised arrangements• Review arrangement	April 99 Oct 99	
ix) Review Overall Performance	July 2000	