

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Early Years, Children & Youth Panel	
MEETING DATE:	10 th October 2011	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
TITLE:	School Meals	
WARD:	ALL	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
<p>List of attachments to this report:</p> <p>School Food Trust letter – September 2011</p> <p>School Food Trust statistics 2010-11</p>		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This is a periodic report on school meals in Bath & North East Somerset schools.

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Early Years, Children & Youth Panel is asked to accept the report.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no proposals within the report that have additional financial implications.

4 THE REPORT

4.1 This report relates mainly to the school meals service provided to B&NES primary schools. Catering Services (part of Property Services) provides 4,500 hot meals in total each day, to all but one of these primary schools; the remaining one is provided with a sandwich service.

4.2 Secondary schools make individual arrangements; some use external catering companies and most run in-house catering. The information held on secondary schools meals is limited and there is no regular mechanism for co-ordinating it.

4.3 Demand for meals – School Food Trust Survey

<i>B&NES</i>	<i>2010/11</i>	<i>2009/10</i>	<i>2008/09</i>
<i>Primary & Special take-up</i>	<i>39.0%</i>	<i>36.6%</i>	<i>34.4%</i>
<i>Number of meals up by % on previous year</i>	<i>+6.5%</i>	<i>+6.4%</i>	
<i>Secondary (does not include all</i>	<i>32.8%</i>	<i>29.9%</i>	<i>31.2%</i>

<i>B&NES secondary schools)</i>			
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<i>England take-up</i>	<i>2010/11</i>	<i>2009/10</i>	<i>2008/09</i>
<i>Primary & Special</i>	<i>44.1%</i>	<i>41.4%</i>	<i>39.3%</i>
<i>Secondary</i>	<i>37.6%</i>	<i>35.8%</i>	<i>35.0%</i>

- 4.4 Overall demand for meals in B&NES primary schools has finally returned to the levels of 2005-6 following a period of decline. Take-up has risen over the past few years, broadly in line with national trends. Local authority areas with high free school meals eligibility tend to have the highest overall take-up. For more detail on levels of take-up, eligibility for free school meals and obesity levels, see the two attachments.
- 4.5 The Council decided not to increase meal prices from 1 September 2011. A survey of 9 B&NES primary schools for w/e 23 September 2011 shows an overall increase in demand for paid meals of 7% compared to the same week in 2010. Of the 9 schools sampled, 2 show reductions and the remainder show increases of at least 10%; no account is taken in this of possible changes in the number of pupils on roll or of eligibility for free school meals.
- 4.6 Menus and Nutrition: different menus are offered over a three-week cycle in primary schools. The ingredients are analysed for nutritional content and the menus conform to the government standards introduced in 2008.
- 4.7 Food procurement contracts are currently out to tender. This year the contracts will be let jointly with Bristol City Council and will commence in November.
- 4.8 The Soil Association's Food For Life programme provides a framework for improving food culture in schools. 41 B&NES schools are registered with the Food For Life programme, of which 1 has Gold, 2 have Silver and 10 have Bronze; this is a very high level of commitment un-matched by other local authorities. There is evidence that FFL schools achieve higher levels of demand for school meals.
- 4.9 Payment options: schools can decide to purchase software to allow parents / guardians to make online payments for meals and other items. In secondary schools operating cash cafeterias this software can be combined with electronic point of sale systems to allow cashless payments for meals. Some B&NES secondary schools operate such systems. Online payment systems offer advantages to primary schools too but in primary schools there is a fixed price menu and there are no cash transactions at the point of sale; payments can be made by parents direct to the school office. As far as I am aware, one primary school offers online payments.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

6 EQUALITIES

6.1 Hot school meals are available to all pupils in the majority of the Council's schools.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Cabinet Member; Other B&NES Services; Section 151 Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer.

7.2 By circulation of this report.

8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

8.1 Social Inclusion; Sustainability; Young People.

9 ADVICE SOUGHT

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Council Solicitor) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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Background papers	
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