Review Title: **Primary School Meals Review**
Overview & Scrutiny Panel: **Education, Youth, Culture and Leisure**
Panel Chairman: **Cllr. Andrew Furse**
Overview & Scrutiny Project Officer: **Alison Enever**
Supporting Service Officer: **Mary Rozmus-West, Commercial Services Manager**

Process for Tracking O&S Recommendations - Guidance note for Executive Members
The enclosed table lists all the recommendations arising from the above Overview & Scrutiny Review. Individual recommendations are referred to the relevant named Executive Members (or whole Executive in the case of a whole Executive referral) as listed in the '**Exec Member'** column of the table. In order to provide the O&S Panel with an Executive response on each recommendation, the named Executive member (or whole Executive) is asked to complete the last 3 columns of the table as follows:

Decision Response
The Executive has the following options:

- **Accept** the Panel's recommendation
- **Reject** the Panel's recommendation
- **Defer** a decision on the recommendation because a response cannot be given at this time. This could be because the recommendation needs to be considered in light of a future Executive decision, imminent legislation, relevant strategy development or budget considerations, etc.

Implementation Date

- For 'Accept' decision responses, give the date that the recommendation will be implemented.
- For 'Defer' decision responses, give the date that the recommendation will be reconsidered.
- For 'Reject' decisions this is not applicable so write n/a

Rationale
Use this space to explain the rationale for your decision response and implementation date. For accepted recommendations, please give details of how they will be implemented.

s

Primary School Meals Review: Recommendations

Recommendation	Exec Member	Decision Response	Implementation Date	Rationale
A Vision for the Future of the Primary School Meals Service: A Council-Led Policy				
Recommendation 1 Bath and North East Somerset should continue to provide a school meals service to all those Primary Schools who wish to receive it. It is recommended that this service should extend well beyond the statutory provision of free school meals, and should be improved in order to attract an increased take-up amongst all pupils.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	8.8.2005	
Recommendation 2 The Executive Member is asked to formulate a Local Education Authority policy on Primary School Meals which would: - Provide Commercial Services, as the in-house provider of the service, with a clear steer for the future provision of the service - Re-establish the importance of the Education Service's role as the commissioner of the Primary School Meals Service - Encourage the LEA in co-operation with schools to take ownership of the Primary School Meals Service and set clear guidelines for all schools on meal provision - Encourage the LEA and schools to work closely with Commercial Services, Heads and Governors to ensure the successful	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	July 2006	LEA will undertake this in partnership with Commercial Services and primary schools.

implementation of the policy The Executive Member is asked to bring this Policy, once formulated back before the Education, Youth, Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel for their consideration.				
Recommendation 3 The Primary School Meals Service should be focused on providing a good quality, healthy and nutritious meal which children will enjoy and want to eat. The Council should work increasingly closely with the Bath and North East Somerset Primary Care Trust in order to address this.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	August 2005	We will continue to work with B&NES Primary Care Trust in order to address this.
Recommendation 4 Schools should be encouraged to increase integration between the lunchtime experience of those pupils taking sandwiches and those who are provided with a school meal. Neither group should be disadvantaged or feel excluded by having less play time as a result of their meal choices.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	August 2006	We have no direct control over how schools conduct their school meal environment, but we will encourage schools in this area.
Recommendation 5 It is recommended that schools are encouraged to further incorporate the provision of a healthy school meal within wider healthy schools initiatives. The Executive is asked to formulate a series of best practice guidelines for primary schools, which would encourage them to consolidate existing moves to educate children on food and nutrition issues, and to encourage a healthy schools approach to include the provision of healthy snacks for breaktimes.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	August 2006	We will again carry this out in partnership with Commercial Services and primary schools.

Recommendation 6 The Executive is asked to investigate the possibility of working with schools to allow the multiple use of school kitchens, in particular as a resource for food technology teaching.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Reject		I feel that this would be unachievable due to health & safety issues and the limited time of the day that the kitchens would be available. (No research has been done on this).
Recommendation 7 The Executive is asked to consider the production of a leaflet which could be issued by Bath & North East Somerset to parents, both as a means to explain and promote the school meals service and its nutritional make-up and values, but also to influence those parents who provide packed lunches for their children. It is suggested that this leaflet could include: - healthy eating ideas and recipes - nutritional information - suggestions for creating a healthy lunchbox - information on the primary school meals service and its nutritional values	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	August 2006	
Recommendation 8 A realistic and deliverable programme for change should be put in place by the Executive Member, with annual targets, and regular re-evaluation. This programme should include targets on: - increased use of fresh produce - increased use of locally produced foods - increased use of “proper” meat - increased proportion of food to be “home-cooked” - implementation of a training programme - purchasing of additional equipment	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	August 2006	We have already started to implement this.

- increasing take-up of primary school meals				
Sourcing of Supplies for Primary School Meals				
Recommendation 9 Current contracts should be reviewed and more supplies should be sourced directly from suppliers and local farms. New contracts should be flexible in order to encourage contractors to make use of suitable local supplies.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	August 2006	We have to be aware of supply and demand on this issue.
Recommendation 10 Commercial Services should work to forge partnerships with local farmers in order to encourage and enable them to gear up for production to supply schools. Work should be done to establish agreed volumes for farms, so that farmers can plan ahead.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	August 2006	This has to be achieved within cost.
Recommendation 11 The emphasis on the food is that it should be *produced* locally rather than *sourced* locally.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	August 2006	
Recommendation 12 After careful consideration the Panel feel that there is no evidence of specific nutritional benefits for the use of organic foods, and suggest that the focus of this Authority should rather be on providing a good quality meal for primary school children, reducing to an absolute minimum the amounts of processed food used.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	August 2005	

Recommendation 13 The Executive should put targets in place for a stepped increase in the use of locally produced foods.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	August 2006	
Menus and Nutrition				
Recommendation 14 The Primary School Meals Service in Bath & North East Somerset should be working to meet the Caroline Walker Trust guidelines for school meals. It is understood that these are currently under revision with updated guidelines to be issued in June. The Executive is asked that a set of targets are put in place to ensure that these guidelines are met by September 2006.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	September 2006	This will be achieved where possible.
Recommendation 15 The use of fresh foods should be encouraged where possible, but fresh-frozen foods or dried foods could be used where appropriate if they meet nutritional requirements.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	August 2006	
Recommendation 16 There should be a move away from the use of processed foods, with stepped targets to ensure reduction of use by September 2006. Targets should also be set in place and regularly reviewed to ensure the reduction of sugars, salt and additives in school meals, and the cutting out entirely of sweeteners.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	September 2006	We have already taken substantial steps in reducing sugar, artificial sweeteners, salts and additives in school meals.
Recommendation 17				

Menus should be simplified so that children are not confused by too much choice, and this should also help to reduce costs and make provision easier.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	December 2005	
Recommendation 18 Menus should be responsive to the season, and a winter/summer menu split should be considered to encourage take up during the summer months.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	September 2006	
Recommendation 19 A wider variety of interesting, well balanced vegetarian foods should be available, with less reliance on cheese-based recipes. Vegetarian options should be available to all children.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	December 2005	
Recommendation 20 Once menus are agreed and issued to parents they should be adhered to.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	December 2005	Except in exceptional circumstances.
Recommendation 21 Portion sizes should be adapted for different age groups of children, to ensure children are neither overwhelmed nor left hungry. Good practice in this area should be reinforced through training.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	December 2005	
Staff training and development				
Recommendation 22 There should be a recognition that in order to achieve improvements increased labour time will be necessary	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	December 2005	Any increase in costs must be within agreed budgets.

Recommendation 23 The Executive is asked to formulate a training programme for school cooks which would include: - short-term training to prepare staff for making food from basic ingredients - longer-term training programme to ensure all staff supported in changes, and that skills are maintained and built upon - training on hygiene and cleaning standards - consideration of the introduction of training towards a catering qualification - consideration of the use of an assessor to identifying existing skills, and target training where it is needed This training programme should be tailored specifically to meet the needs of school cooks who provide food for children, and links could be made with local vocational colleges to ensure a consistent standard of catering training	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	December 2005	
Recommendation 24 Training should also be provided for SMSA's, and recognition made of the role they can play in making healthy school meals a success.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Reject		SMSA's are employed by the schools not by the LEA, so although I would agree with this recommendation we can only encourage schools to give suitable training.
Production and Organisation				
Recommendation 25 There should be consistent provision of primary school meals across Bath & North East Somerset. Where a school does not have a production kitchen it should be able to be supplied with a good quality, full and substantial hot meal.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	December 2005	

Recommendation 26 The Executive need to clarify the ownership of kitchen and dining space and how schools are expected to maintain this facility.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	December 2005	
Recommendation 27 Consideration should be given to encouraging schools to spend capital money on good multi-use dining facilities which recognises the importance of school meals, and the integral role they have to play in school life. Existing space should also be put to best use in order to provide the best possible dining experience for pupils.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	December 2005	Although I agree with this we have no control over direct school capital spending.
Recommendation 28 There should be a continuing awareness of the best means of transporting hot meals to dining centre schools, the optimum time/distance, storage etc, and best practice should be reinforced.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	December 2005	
Recommendation 29 There should be a recognition that additional equipment will need to be purchased in order to deliver the changes recommended throughout this report.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	August 2005	We have already purchased a substantial amount of new equipment.
Take-up of primary school meals				
Recommendation 30 There should be a continual review of meals provided to ensure that a good quality service is maintained and that children are still receiving a good quality meal which they want to eat. Initially these reviews should be undertaken by the Food	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Reject	December 2005	I do not believe that using Trading Standards is a suitable use of resources. Otherways of reviewing this should be explored.

Trading Standards team. Spot-checks, without prior warning, should be carried out to avoid any possible swaying of results by schools being prepared in advance for checks.				
Recommendation 31 Consideration should be given by the Executive to implementing measures to ease the burden for families where more than one child is taking school meals.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Reject		We will review this again at some later date.
Recommendation 32 The Executive is asked to draw together a consistent policy across all primary schools to ensure that menus are communicated efficiently and effectively to all parents. In drawing up this policy it is recommended that: - the example of those schools where good practice already exists should be drawn on - each week on the menu cycle should be dated rather than "week 1", "week 2" etc which can lead to confusion amongst parents as to which week is currently being followed. - Menus should be sent out to parents regularly, and it is suggested that schools could be requested to send them home with children and/or incorporate them into existing newsletters. - A continuing dialogue should be encouraged via such newsletters between parents and the Council to ensure that the reputation of the Authority's meals service continues to improve	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	December 2005	

Cost implications				
Recommendation 33 The Food for Life Pilot should continue to be monitored, with an update provided to the Panel in November 2005.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Accept	November 2005	
Recommendation 34 The Executive Member is asked to formulate proposals for how any increased costs could be managed. Options would include: - a rise in the cost to parents - improved take-up levels - The LEA absorbing some of the increase. The Executive Member is asked to bring these proposals back to the Panel by November 2005.	Cllr Jonathan Gay	Defer	December 2006	We will be deferring this until we have a clearer picture on the impact of the proposed changes. Consideration needs to be given to ways of accessing quality of products from suppliers.