



Leicester  
City Council

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## **FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS**

**Children & Young People's Scrutiny Task Group**

**15 March 2011**

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### **Final Report of the Scrutiny Task Group Review of the City School Meals Service**

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#### **Report of the Divisional Director, Planning & Commissioning**

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This Report presents the Final Report of the Scrutiny Task Group Review of the Leicester City School Meals Service operated by City Catering.

##### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Scrutiny is asked to receive the Report.
- 2.2. That this Report be brought before the attention of the Cabinet for their information and consideration.
- 2.3. That Schools Forum be alerted to the completion of this Review and the Headline findings detailed at Section 17, particularly Recommendation 16 with regard to potential future subsidy from the Dedicated Schools Grant.

##### **3. Report**

- 3.1 On 6 July 2010 Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee determined to establish a Task Group to review school meal provision by the in house catering provider, City Catering. A work programme was published, evidence compiled and presentations received at subsequent meetings of the Scrutiny Committee. Detail of the areas covered may be found at Section 6 of this Report.
- 3.2 The Review was transacted in public session with officers responding to a range of detailed questions from Task Group members including young people's representatives.

- 3.3 As a key part of the Review Task Group members visited a wide range of Schools and sampled the menus on offer. These visits included both production kitchens and dining centres where meals are transported in. This provided members with first hand experience of the meals on offer, the environment in which they are served, practical operational challenges, meal promotion and an opportunity to discuss the quality of the meals service with staff and young people.
- 3.4 As part of the Review members also commissioned a broad based consultation upon the service offered and this attracted over 800 responses from young people themselves. These outcomes have informed service delivery and contributed to the accompanying Report. Further details of the Survey and headline findings may be found at Section 15 of the Final Task Group Report.
- 3.5 Task Group have also considered a wide range of factors affecting impacting upon the service and the contribution that the service makes to promoting well being and combating child and family poverty (See meeting of 2 November 2010). Details of this work can be found at Section 13 of the accompanying Task Group Report.
- 3.6 In summary, Task Group have interrogated a wide range of comparative benchmark data reached a number of key conclusions about the service offered and considered its future development.
- 3.7 Task Group recommend some priority actions for implementation by officers and issues for consideration of Cabinet and Schools Forum. These actions are summarised in 19 recommendations detailed at Section 17 of the accompanying Task Group report.
- 3.8 The full findings of the Task Group are contained within the accompanying Report and in a wide range of supporting documentation that is available for download via the City Council website.
- 3.9 All supporting documentation referred to within the accompanying Task Group Report is available at the web addresses detailed at Sections 6 and 7 below.

## **4. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1. Financial Implications**

This report sets out the findings of the Scrutiny Task Group, and as such reports on a range of financial issues. There are perhaps three particular points to highlight - firstly, the challenge of maintaining a viable City Catering schools meals service and a realistic pricing strategy, given the significant additional costs brought about by Single Status and to a lesser extent inflationary pressures on food and other costs; secondly, the need to invest in kitchen and dining facilities, which for primary schools will need to be prioritised against other calls upon the capital funding for maintenance, and which for secondary and special schools will need to be delivered as part of the BSF programme; and thirdly, that the School Lunch Grant will be mainstreamed into the Dedicated Schools Grant / Schools Budget and (in the

longer term, if not in 2011/12), use of the funds will need to be actively prioritised against other demands on the Schools Budget.

**Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, Investing in our Children, Tel: 0116 252 7750**

#### **4.2. Legal Implications**

The legal framework surrounding the duty to provide free school meals, and the requirements for standards of school meals in general, are set out on the main body of the report. No radical changes are indicated by this Review, which instead focuses on gauging current provision (including bench-marking) and providing insights into future service delivery options. If and when the service does undergo re-design (in pricing, products or delivery-style) consideration will need to be given to how such proposals are consulted upon and implemented so as to comply with any public law duties that may arise.

**Kamal Adatia, Barrister, Head of Community Services Law, Leicester City Council, Tel: 0116 252 7044**

#### **4.3. Climate Change Implications**

This report does not contain any significant climate change implications and therefore should not have a detrimental effect on the Council's climate change targets.

**Helen Lansdown, Senior Environmental Consultant - Sustainable Procurement , Tel: 0116 252 6770**

#### **5. Other Implications**

<b>OTHER IMPLICATIONS</b>	<b>YES/ NO</b>	<b>Paragraph/References Within Supporting information</b>
Equal Opportunities	Y	Whole report. Section 13 of the Task Group report explores the link between school meals, health inequality and poverty.
Policy	Y	Whole report.
Sustainable and Environmental	N	
Crime and Disorder	N	
Human Rights Act	N	
Elderly/People on Low Income	Y	Whole report. Section 13 of the Task Group report explores the link between school meals, health inequality and poverty.
Corporate Parenting	Y	
Health Inequalities Impact	Y	Evidence suggests that health outcomes are

		clearly linked to good nutrition and lifestyle . Alleviation of poverty and provision of a good school meal will contribute to improved health and well being across the City.
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## 6. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

6.1 Task Group have considered evidence as detailed below:

Date of Meeting	Subject of enquiry – evidence reviewed
6 July 2010	Outline Project Plan
3 August 2010	Background report on current provision of school meals. Letter to Schools advising on initiation of review.
31 August 2010	Benchmark data on comparison with other local authority providers
21 September 2010	Feedback from initial school visits
2 November 2010	Presentation by Health on the links between nutrition, health and well being.
7 December 2010	Results of parent, carer and young people on line survey of school meals.  Discussion of cashless systems
11 January 2011	School visits, free school meals registration, School Lunch Grant and implications of Single Status
28 February 2011	Consideration of initial draft findings

6.2 All background papers produced and considered above by the Task Group including parent and pupil consultation results may be viewed at the website below:

<http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk/uuCoverpage.aspx>

## **7 Consultations**

- 7.1 Copies of parent and pupil questionnaires and consultation outcomes may be viewed at the website below:

<http://www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk/uuCoverpage.aspx>

Interested parties should refer to the supporting papers for the meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee held on 7 December 2010.

### **Report Author**

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