

To: ENVIRONMENT POLICY BOARD

On: 9 NOVEMBER 2016

Report by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Heading: FOOD FOR LIFE CATERING MARK ACCREDITATION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Soil Association Food for Life Catering Mark is a scheme supported by the Scottish Government that aims to raise standards of food quality, provenance and sustainability in public and private sector catering. The Catering Mark is awarded at three levels based on the steps that a caterer is taking towards the Catering Mark values. These levels are Bronze, Silver and Gold.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Environment Policy Board notes the service developments and progress towards application for the Food for Life Catering Mark Bronze Award Standard for primary schools.
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3. Background

- 3.1 Over the last four years Facilities Management (Soft Services) has implemented a new catering service style in primary schools with a 'Grab and Go' type lunch provided three days per week and a more traditional 'Dine in Day' service two days per week. The new service was developed in line with significant stakeholder consultation, including pupil feedback, which highlighted a desire to have more time

to play during lunch time. The new service was implemented over a period of time, from an initial small number of pilot schools with the final school implemented in December 2015. The 'Eat, Meet and Play' ethos has proved very popular with pupils and has been supported by investment in branding, communications and a pre-ordering system to improve the throughput of the lunch time service.

- 3.2 As part of the Better Council Change Programme, investment was made in two central production units (CPUs), as launched in August 2015. Each unit is located in a secondary school kitchen and produces high volume items, such as sandwiches and home baking for the full school estate. This has increased efficiency of the service and has also improved quality and consistency of the food provided.
- 3.3 Whilst the service changes within the schools catering service over the last four years have modernised the schools catering service and improved efficiency, catering staff have fed back an aspiration to improve their cooking skills by preparing more meals on site. Having an appropriately skilled and confident workforce is a key component of service improvement and maintaining staff morale. The service has explored options for introducing greater food production within school kitchens.
- 3.4 Options have been investigated and tested in parallel with discussions with the Soil Association with regards their Food for Life Catering Mark accreditation. The accreditation scheme aims to raise standards of food quality, provenance and sustainability in public and private sector catering.

4. Soil Association Food for Life Catering Mark – Bronze Award

- 4.1 Facilities Management (Soft Services) has engaged with the Soil Association to determine the specific requirements of working towards the Catering Mark Bronze Award for the primary school catering service. An initial gap analysis of the school meal menu demonstrated that of the 13 standards required to achieve the Bronze Award Standard 10 were already being met, with 3 requiring some further development. The Bronze Award Standards are set out in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 The main requirement for the Bronze Award Standard stipulates that at least 75% of dishes across a 4 week menu cycle are freshly prepared with unprocessed ingredients. At the time of the gap analysis 61% of dishes were already compliant with that standard. It was evident that with some minor alterations to the menu and method of production, freshly preparing 75% of dishes was wholly achievable. This approach also aligns with catering staff aspiration of improving cooking skills by preparing more food on site and provides a formal accreditation award for doing so.

- 4.3 New methods of food production were tested over a period of time and some food items replaced with others that meet the Bronze Award Standard. A number of menu options are now freshly prepared in primary schools including, pasta sauces, pizza's, baked potato toppings and fish pie. Feedback from staff and pupils has been very positive, with the quality of the food produced improved and staff happy to utilise their cooking skills. The service intends to continue to develop the menu in this way.
- 4.4 Part of the specific Bronze Award Standard accreditation process determines that seasonal produce is utilised where possible and must be shown on the menu. Work is also ongoing to produce material highlighting the provenance of the food we serve in schools, which would meet the final element of the Bronze Award Standard that we currently do not meet.
- 4.5 All menu and food production changes have been delivered on a cost neutral basis. The progressive service redesign changes and the investment in 2 central production units, as detailed earlier in paragraph 3.2, has created sufficient capacity within the schools catering service to produce more prepared food on site.
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5. Training

- 5.1 To support the process and provide continuing professional development for staff, the catering service is working in partnership with West College Scotland to provide a new bespoke Cooking Skills training programme for catering staff. The 10 week programme began in September 2016 and will provide training for 14 staff on a day release basis to gain a college qualification. The training programme will run twice per year on an annual basis.
- 5.2 A broad course outline is shown below and further detail provided in Appendix 2
- Basic skills and techniques
 - Knife use
 - Food preparation techniques
 - Cookery processes
 - Food hygiene and HACCP procedures
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – Menu and food production changes have been delivered within existing budget. Soil Association annual certification is capped at £995 plus VAT and this includes the annual audit fee and membership fee for each site. This will be met

within the existing revenue budget. The Cooking Skills training programme will be delivered by West College Scotland at a cost of £4k per cohort, which will also be met within the existing revenue budget.

2. **HR & Organisational Development** – The Cooking Skills training programme will be delivered by West College Scotland and will provide training for 14 catering staff each intake with two planned per year.

3. **Community Planning**

Children and Young People – The delivery of our healthy school meal service helps children have the best start in life and supports the link between nutrition and educational attainment.

Greener – The catering service minimises food waste to help reduce the environmental impact of food waste disposal.

Jobs and the Economy – the service actively participates in Invest in Renfrewshire and Project Search.

Safer and Stronger - safe working practices are in place for the delivery of our services. The catering service food safety management system within our secondary schools is ISO 22000:2005 registered.

4. **Legal** – None.

5. **Property/Assets** – None.

6. **Information Technology** – None.

7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – None

9. **Procurement** – None

10. **Risk** – None

11. **Privacy Impact** – None

List of Background Papers: None

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Food for Life Catering Mark Accreditation

At the present time eleven local authorities in Scotland hold the Catering Mark for their schools meals service, two have achieved gold, 2 have achieved Silver and 7 have achieved Bronze.

Bronze Standards

- No undesirable additives or trans fats
- At least 75% of dishes are freshly prepared from unprocessed ingredients
- Meat is from farms which satisfy UK welfare standards
- Eggs are from cage-free hens
- Menus are seasonal and in-season produce is highlighted
- Catering staff are supported with skills training in fresh food preparation and the Catering Mark
- No GM ingredients are used*
- Free drinking water is prominently available
- No fish is served from the (MSC) 'fish to avoid' list
- Information is on display about food provenance
- All suppliers have been verified to ensure they apply appropriate food safety standards
- Caterers in schools and academies, early years and residential care settings and hospitals can demonstrate their compliance with national standards or guidelines on food and nutrition
- Menus provide for all dietary and cultural needs

* this standard cannot guarantee that meat is from animals fed on GM-free feeds, as most non-organic meat, eggs and dairy products come from animals that may be fed on GM animal feed.

Silver and Gold Catering Accreditation

The Silver and Gold Standards are assessed on a points system. Food providers are rewarded for every percentage point of their ingredient spend on ethical and environmentally friendly food, locally sourced ingredients and steps to offer healthier menus.

To achieve Silver and Gold, you must also demonstrate that you meet the Bronze Standards.

Cooking skills training programme delivered by West College Scotland

Day	Subject
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| 1 | Induction
HACCP Procedures
Basic knife skills
Basic cuts of vegetables
Simple soup making |
| 2 | Food preparation techniques
Safe working practices
Selection and use of equipment and techniques
Basic sauces and derivatives |
| 3 | Cookery processes
Methods of cookery
Controlling the cookery processes
Simple meat, poultry and fish dishes |
| 4 | Cookery Processes
Methods of cookery
Controlling the cookery processes
Simple meat, poultry and fish dishes |
| 5 | Salads and cold preparation |
| 6 | Pasta and pizza |
| 7 | Vegetables and rice |
| 8 | Pastry: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Savoury products• Sweet products |
| 9 | Desserts <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hot• Cold |
| 10 | Healthy eating/ alternatives and vegetarian dishes
Evaluation of programme |