

**STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PROFORMA**

Cabinet Meeting .....17th February 2011

1. Title of Item/Report

Efficiency, Improvement and Transformation - School Catering

2. Record of the Decision

Members considered a report that presented the findings of the EIT review of School Catering undertaken by the Corporate, Adult Services and Social Inclusion Select Committee between June 2010 and January 2011.

The Select Committee's review examined the provision of a catering service in 59 primary schools, one secondary school, and three special needs schools within the Borough. Although the service received an income from the schools and from the parents of children it provided lunches to, this income did not cover its cost and the Authority provided a subsidy. Therefore, the overall aims of the review were to identify options for future strategy, policy and service provision that would deliver efficiency savings to reduce the subsidy while sustaining / improving high quality outcomes for SBC residents

It was explained that Council's Medium Term Financial Plan allocated an annual rise of 5p per meal to cope with inflationary pressures. Historically, when there was an increase in the cost of the school meal the uptake of meals decreased, however, this was a temporary decrease and uptake generally recovered after approximately a half school term.

The Committee believed that a further increase was necessary, however was mindful of the pressure on larger families and did not wish to increase the cost to the extent that it discouraged take up of a school meal. Therefore, the Committee proposed that the price of a school meal should be increased to £1.95 from September 2011.

The Committee considered that by reviewing staffing guide scales and allowances to increase efficiency and reduce the amount of added value work within each school, savings could be achieved to reduce the subsidy the service received while still providing a quality service to the schools, and a healthy, nutritious meal to pupils.

The Committee had looked at the 'added value' work undertaken by the catering service and appreciated that this work supported both the Obesity Strategy and the Authority's objective to promote healthy lifestyles. However, it was felt that the number of projects carried out in each school could be reduced, without having a significant impact on the service provided to each school. A revised and reduced Management Structure had been produced and reflected the reduced service delivery and direct support offered to Schools as part of this review. The reduced Management Structure was proposed to bring forward significant efficiencies.

Cabinet noted that an action plan would be submitted to the Select Committee setting out how approved recommendations would be implemented.

RESOLVED that

1. the price of a school meal be increased to £1.95 from September 2011.
2. the staffing guide scale and kitchen allowances hours be reduced as set out in Appendix 3 of the report.
3. a revised management structure as set out in Appendix 4 of the report be implemented.
4. as part of negotiations for SLAs for School Catering to start in 2012/13, officers discuss with schools options such as service development and increasing uptake to reduce the resource allocations subsidy.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To identify options for future strategy, policy and service provision that would deliver efficiency savings to reduce the subsidy that the Authority provided to deliver meals within schools while sustaining / improving high quality outcomes for SBC residents.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Mrs McCoy, Coleman, Nelson, Beall and Cook declared personal non-prejudicial interests in the item entitled EIT Review – School Catering, as they were school governors.

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on 25 February 2011

Proper Officer  
21 February 2011