

DEVELOPMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES  
CATERING SERVICES

**SCHOOL CATERING EIT REVIEW**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Catering Service within Development & Neighbourhood Services, Stockton on Tees Borough Council currently provides school catering to all Primary schools within the Borough with the exception of Myton Park at Ingleby Barwick. The service also provides school lunches to Special Schools, pupil referral units and one Secondary school. In addition to providing a nutritionally balanced school meal, the service delivers many different levels of service to schools via individual Service Level Agreements.

The overall objective for the School Catering EIT Review is to identify options for future strategy, policy and service provision that will deliver efficiency savings and both sustain and continued to improve high quality service delivery to all its users and stakeholders.

**OUTCOMES**

Initially the working group had put forward 9 options that would potentially offer savings from the Catering Service.

It was agreed that further detailed information and analysis was to be provided on the following options:-

Option 2 – Reduction of labour guidescales for staff hours.

All kitchens used staffing guidescales on a weekly basis to calculate the following weeks hours needed based on the weeks meals produced. Hours could fluctuate weekly as meals increased/decreased.

This is based on meals served in the current week. Kitchen staff hours, which are overtime, not contractual hours, can fluctuate weekly as meals increase or decrease.

By rationalising the guidescale hours it will immediately reduce labour costs across all Primary schools. It will also increase productivity. This option can be implemented with immediate effect with no disruption to stakeholders and customers and will make significant efficiency and financial savings.

Kitchens are also given kitchen 'allowances' depending on various working factors and with the Operations Manager's discretion. Historically, these have been continually reduced as kitchens have been improved, but as part of this review will be reduced across the board. Copies of Primary kitchen guidescales, current and proposed and Primary kitchen allowances are attached at **Appendix 1 & 2**.

Each school has been staffed showing the current working hours based on 09/10 average daily meal numbers and both current guidescale and proposed guidescale hours, this is shown at **Appendix 3**. This is shown by school including hours saved and is also attached.

## **OPTION 2 COSTINGS**

Staffing based on daily average meals, unchanged guidescales and allowances, current cost **£2,579,196..**

Daily average meals proposed reduced guidescale hours and allowances, revised cost **£2,415,814.**

**TOTAL SAVING - £163,382.**

Option 6 – Increase the cost of the school meal for those who pay.

Currently the cost of a Primary School meal is £1.85. By increasing the cost in 10p intervals would increase income as shown:-

Current Primary school paid meal price is £1.85 - total income **£1,519,370.**

£1.95 annual income would be **£1,560,434** – an increase of **£41,064**

£2.05 annual income would be **£1,642,562** – an increase of **£123,192**

£2.15 annual income would be **£1,724,690** – an increase of **£205,320**

**It has already been assumed within the Councils Medium Term Financial Plan that there is an annual rise of 5p to cope with inflationary pressures. The only saving raised by the increase in prices in these scenarios is as a result of a rise greater than 5p.**

**These figures are based on current meal uptake. It is known historically that meal numbers always decrease upon increasing the meal price to customers.**

Option 7 – Do not carry out/reduce the ‘added value’ work.

The Catering Section agree individual Service Level Agreements with all Primary schools across the Borough. The SLA encompasses production and service of meals, repairs and maintenance of equipment and of required school meal cash administration to schools. In order to increase the uptake of school meals, the department works very closely with schools on curriculum based activities, healthy food weeks, taster days and offering sampler sessions to parents during consultation evenings.

The service delivers marketing and promotional activities to all schools, theme days in particular are very popular. The Management Team also deliver cooking classes in school as requested. This involves pupils in fruit and vegetable games, making bread dough and worksheets. This is done as ‘added value’. Some schools have also received healthy eating lessons and presentation at assemblies. By reducing the Management Team, in particular the removal of the Business Development Manager post, would prevent a lot of this marketing.

The service works nationally delivering projects such as National School Meals Week and assisting with schools to achieve Healthy Schools status.

The other saving on the structure would be if less 'added value' projects were to be given in schools. One Area Manager would become a term time position only as no preparation time would be required within school holidays.

- 3 -

Existing Management Team structure cost - **£247,997**

Proposed Management Team structure cost - **£199,868**

Total saving of **£48,130**

**Total combined savings Option 2 and Option 7 -£211,512**

Option 8 – Partnering with Darlington Borough Council.

This option has not been pursued further at the moment and will be looked at further when this may become a viable option to implement.

Members discounted the following:-

Option 3 – Provision of only cold meals e.g. sandwiches, wraps and fruit.

Option 4 – Provision of a service for hot free school meals only.

Option 5 – Provision of a service for cold free school meals only.

Option 9 – Outsource School Meals Service.