

Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee

A meeting of Corporate, Adult Services & Social Inclusion Select Committee was held on Tuesday, 20th April, 2010.

Present: Cllr Mick Stoker(Chairman), Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Aidan Cockerill, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Miss Tina Large, Cllr Bill Noble, Cllr Roy Rix

Officers: Mrs A Brown, P Diggins, J McCann (DNS); G Birtle and Mrs T Harrison (LD)

Also in attendance: No other persons were present

Apologies: Cllr Andrew Larkin, Cllr Mick Womphrey

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes to be signed by the Chairman - 15th September 2009, 1st October 2009 and 27th October 2009

The minutes of 15th September 2009, 1st October 2009 and 27th October 2009 were signed by the Chair.

3 Draft minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2010.

Members considered the draft minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2010.

CONCLUDED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 9th March 2010 be agreed as a correct record and be forwarded on to Council.

4 Quarterly Progress Updates of Previously Agreed Recommendations

Members considered the assessment of progress in relation the recommendations from the reviews on Meeting Venues and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Members raised concern at the delay on achieving recommendation 3 of the Voluntary and Community Sector review, although this had now been achieved.

Concern was also raised regarding recommendation 4. The Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee of the EIT reviews of Youth Services, and Building Assets which could provide information for monitoring of this recommendation.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The report be noted.

2. Information from the EIT reviews will be presented to the committee when it is available.

5 EIT Review of School Catering

Informal discussion with Jamie McCann (Head of Direct Services), Anita

Brown (Catering and Cleaning Manager) and Paul Diggins (Performance Manager, D&NS)

Officers advised that the benefits of school meals were well documented.

Members were advised that the school meal provided by the Council to Stockton's schools were currently subsidised. The actual cost of an individual meal was £2.57 but the charge to parents was £1.80. The school Standards Grant provided 32p of the cost but Job Evaluation added 45p to the cost which resulted in an additional cost of £460,000 to school meals because of Job Evaluation.

Members were advised that all meals were nutritionally balanced and the use of better quality food was being considered. However any additional costs would be a consideration as continued funding could no be guaranteed.

Discussion took place regarding breakfast clubs; Members were advised that the Children's fund had funded the clubs for ten schools; however the funding had since been withdrawn so charges had to be made. A further eight schools had always charged. Members expressed the importance of meals in schools as in many instances it would be the only meal that the child would have.

Members requested information on:

- How many school meals were provided?
- How many were free school meals?
- The total cost
- Details of how the £1.80 charge to parents was worked out and how it could be reduced and what the additional cost would be to the Council
- Charges and rules for breakfast clubs and school meals by other Authorities around the country
- Staff costs linked to school meals
- Best Practice in relation to school meals.

Members were advised that fizzy drinks and junk food were no longer provided within schools but it was observed that schools could not control what children consumed outside of school.

Officers advised that a recipe book had been created following requests from parents who had attended cooking classes, run by the schools, which had been introduced to help parents identify how to provide nutritionally balanced meals. Members suggested that the recipes could be put on Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's website and in Stockton News to enable everyone in the Borough and beyond to make use of the recipes.

Discussion took place regarding a newspaper article which identified a school that had banned packed lunches. Members requested details of the number of Authorities which had banned packed lunches to ensure that the children ate healthy, nutritionally balanced meals.

Discussion took place regarding the stigma of free school meals. Members requested information on whether there had been a greater uptake of school meals in schools that had introduced a card system which did not single out recipients of free school meals.

Officers advised that the card system was a good system as it also recorded what children had purchased, however the cost was £4,700. per school to install the system.

Officers advised that it was too early to identify whether the uptake of free school meals had increased in schools that provided the card system as it was still in its infancy.

Members noted that some schools did not provide pupils enough time to eat their meals; however officers advised that it was a schools decision.

It was observed that some schools did not have facilities to prepare food so other schools prepared and delivered the food.

Members queried whether academies could be prevented from accepting sponsorships from fizzy drink or junk food companies but were advised that this was outside the remit of the scrutiny review and could only be addressed between the education department and the academy.

CONCLUDED that the following information be provided as part of the baseline information:

- How many school meals were provided?
- How many were free school meals?
- The total cost.
- Details of how the £1.80 charge to parents was worked out and how it could be reduced and what the additional cost would be to the Council.
- Charges and rules for breakfast clubs and school meals by other Authorities around the country.
- Staff costs linked to school meals.
- Best Practice in relation to school meals.
- Details of the number of Authorities which had banned packed lunches.
- Whether there had been a greater uptake of school meals in schools that had introduced a card system.

2. The nutritionally balanced recipes be put on Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's website and in Stockton News to enable everyone in the Borough and beyond to make use of the recipes.

6 Work Programme

Members discussed the future work programme.

CONCLUDED that a draft scope and project plan will be presented to the Committee after the next tripartite meeting.