

# SCHOOL MEALS

## REPORT BY HEAD OF POLICY AND RESOURCES

**REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR D RULE**

**DATE REPORT WILL BE CONSIDERED: 16TH FEBRUARY 2006**

**PROPOSED DATE OF DECISION: 16TH FEBRUARY 2006**

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### Wards Affected

All wards

### Purpose

The Government has made a commitment that there will be universal hot lunch provision for all children by Sept 2008. Cost and practicalities rule out the possibility of every Herefordshire School having a kitchen. Furthermore the introduction of a centralised cook-chill facility would require significant capital expenditure both in initial set up and in creation of a transport system across the county.

It is proposed that Herefordshire's school meal service will be based on each High School, or other appropriate kitchen supplying its feeder primaries with lunches. This will enable existing facilities to be used and keep transport costs to a minimum.

A Draft School Meal Policy is enclosed which explains the proposal in greater detail.

In addition a School Meals Advisory Forum will need to be convened to oversee implementation and ongoing success of the service.

### Key Decision

This is a key decision because it is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards.

### Recommendations

#### THAT

- (a) **the School Meals Policy be approved;**
- (b) **a school meals service based on supplying primary schools from their pyramid high school kitchen or other appropriate production kitchen be developed;**
- (c) **contractual and monitoring arrangements for caterers be improved to ensure consistency, quality and the health promoting nature of school meals;**
- (d) **school catering staff are trained in healthy cooking techniques; and**

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from Julian Reeves  
on 01432 383163

- (e) **the amount of fresh, unprocessed and locally produced food used in school meals be increased.**

## **Reasons**

To give the majority of children access to healthy, nutritious, appetising school lunches

To contribute to a reduction in levels of childhood obesity in Herefordshire

To ensure schools can provide a whole school approach to food and healthy eating

To increase the contribution that school meals can make to the local economy by encouraging and enabling greater local food sourcing.

## **Considerations**

1. Herefordshire Council will receive a standards fund of approx £90 000 per year for the next three years to improve the school meals service. This fund can be used to provide training for catering staff and to facilitate transport of meals. Consideration will need to be given to arrangements after 2008.
2. The government expects universal hot meal provision by 2008. Processes and procedures must be in place in sufficient time to ensure this target is met.
3. If catering staff are to be encouraged to cook more healthily using a much higher proportion of fresh ingredients, staffing hours and hence costs will increase. Schools will each receive small standards fund grants until 2008 which could contribute to increased costs.

## **Alternative Options**

- 1 Creation of one large centralised cook-chill facility to supply the whole school population. This would require a new production facility and a comprehensive transport system. The creation of such a facility would be a major financial commitment.
- 2 The provision of a fully equipped kitchen in every school. Due to the small size of many of our rural schools, this would be prohibitively expensive.

## **Risk Management**

Additional expenditure will need to be planned for beyond 2008 if the healthy and effective school meals service is to be maintained.

## **Consultees**

Peter Norton Projects Officer Bulmer Foundation  
Mo Burns Community Food Worker  
Rebecca Stanners Community Dietician Hereford Hospital.  
Head teachers of all schools in Herefordshire

## **Background Papers**

Draft schools meal policy document