

Meeting	School Meals Scrutiny Review Task Group
Date	27 January 2014
Present	Councillors Brooks, Fitzpatrick, Potter and Mr Pennington

5. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on the agenda.

None were declared.

6. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last School Meals Scrutiny Review Task Group held on Tuesday 25 November 2013 be approved and signed by the Chair.

7. Public Participation

It was reported that there were no registrations to speak under the Councils Public Participation Scheme.

8. School Meals Scrutiny Review - Interim Report

Members considered the interim report that presented the final information gathered in support of this review and asked the Task Group to identify their review conclusions and draft recommendations.

The Chair stated that the majority of the following schools were visited, where possible, over the lunchtime period by one or two Members of the Task Group:

- Carr Infant School
- Westfield Primary School
- Woodthorpe Primary School

- Robert Wilkinson Primary School (no visit, phone conversation only)
- Joseph Rowntree Secondary School
- York High

Each Member gave an update on their visit and it was commonly agreed that:

In regard to the Primary Schools visited:

- Most Heads were very involved and passionate about the food their school provided, although the majority did not want the responsibility of running their kitchens.
- The relationship between the Head Cook and Senior Leadership Team was key to the successful provision of school meals.
- There were some concerns about the frequency of the delivery of fresh produce, although the quality of food on offer was good.
- Most were actively working to increase their uptake of free school meals.
- Most were happy with their current contracts.
- All were encouraging pupils to have a meal and most would be aware if a child had not received a meal.
- The caring ethos in each school was very apparent and each had their own way of supporting and personalising requirements for any children with Special Educational Needs or disabilities.

In regard to Secondary Schools visited:

- There was the potential that some may choose to opt out of the City of York Council contract in the future as they were aware that they were subsidising primary schools and some considered the management fees high. They could also see the potential for making a profit in the future should they decide to provide the meals themselves or make alternative contractual arrangements, either on their own or in collaboration with other schools. In the future, the Council may need to consider if and how it might act as broker and facilitator of innovative arrangements between schools.
- Pupils want more choice.
- The layout of some dining areas made it more difficult to monitor the uptake of meals & free school meals.

- Healthy eating options were provided but the age and preferences of secondary pupils makes monitoring and encouraging their take up difficult
- Where parental and student views had been collected by schools, the cost of school meals was seen as an issue.

It was agreed that Burton Green and Elvington Primary School would still be visited and any feedback would be sent to the Scrutiny Officer. The Head of Schools Services would make the arrangements for two Members to visit Burton Green.¹

The Chair confirmed that the Press article, requesting parental views on school meals, had been delayed but would still be published within the agreed timescales. Officers would also write to all remaining Head teachers within York to request any school meal comments their school may have received over the last 12 months.²

Members agreed that good nutrition was vital to support good learning and were hoping this review would suggest why there was a relatively small increase in take-up of school meals across all York schools and why some parents/carers who are entitled, to do not register and claim for free school meals.

In answer to Members questions officers confirmed they were still in negotiations with the school contractors and were together considering the impact the government's announcement regarding free meals to all reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children would have on the schools.

Resolved: (i) That the report be noted.

(ii) That Burton Green and Elvington Primary Schools be visited and feedback sent to the Scrutiny Officer.

(iii) That a Press release be issued and contact made to all Head Teachers.

Reason: To conclude the work on this review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

Action Required

Arrange Burton Green Primary School Visit	ME
Press Release and contact School Headteachers	ME

Cllr Fitzpatrick, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.45 pm].