

Report of the School Holiday Food Task Group: Cllrs Daubeney, Fenton and Fitzpatrick

Cover Report: School Holiday Food Scrutiny Review

Summary

1. This report provides information on the progress to date of the School Holiday Food Task Group which was set up to respond to a request from the Executive made on 30th September 2021 for Children, Education & Communities (CEC) Policy & Scrutiny Committee to consider: **the effectiveness, impact and funding of the free school meal voucher scheme alongside other grassroots community based provision and other schemes to address food poverty impacts**

Background

2. At its meeting in January 2022, the Committee was asked to set up a Task Group to investigate the free school meal voucher scheme and associated community provision. As the funding was due to run out for this scheme, the Committee was requested to make their recommendations to Executive at the earliest opportunity.
3. A public meeting was held in February 2022 for the Committee Task Group Members to receive the draft Scoping Report (Annex 1) from officers. The following timescales for the Scrutiny Review was agreed with at that meeting:
 - Interim update 13 April 2022
 - Final report 03 May 2022
 - Recommendations to Executive 19 May 2022

Recommendations

4. Members are asked to note the interim update and to make recommendations to the Task Group where appropriate.

Reason: To assist the Task Group in their role to inform council plans to support residents struggling to provide food for children during school holidays.

Findings

5. Since the Scoping Report meeting of 28th February, the Task Group has met twice, on 14th March and on 28th March. At the first meeting, Task Group members discussed the breadth of the areas suggested by officers and began with the background academic research known to exist. Cllr Fitzpatrick will contact an academic she has worked with previously to see if there are other sources of research we ought to include.
6. In considering the proposed information to be gathered to inform recommendations, it was agreed each Task Group member would take responsibility for a separate item of information, and who would be approached in the first instance. Task Group members have a wide knowledge of key persons of responsibility in providers of data, managers of foodbanks, hubs and other grassroots community-based provision to assess levels of sufficiency.
7. At the second meeting, the material already received was briefly discussed plus the need to begin analysing the data. Further information required from foodbanks was identified and the value of anecdotal evidence was recognised for its narrative value.
8. It was considered important to meet with the responsible Food Poverty portfolio-holders on Executive to gain useful steers and observations on the challenge facing the council when Government support is withdrawn. Finally, there is a need to continue to gather relevant information and to begin analysing the data which has already come in. Further work is to be undertaken to assess the extent to which schools are hosting informal food banks and what remaining national funding sources exist.
9. There was a discussion around a proposal to undertake a manageable survey of schools within a very short timescale before Easter. It was proposed that we work with two secondary schools on the East and West of the city, Archbishop Holgate's and York High which has higher levels of entitlement to FSM. This is to be augmented with one or two primaries to create a representative sample - working with the Assistant Director for Education and Skills to implement.

Options

10. This Committee can
 - (i) comment on the progress of the Task Group to date; and/or
 - (ii) recommend further areas of investigation.

Implications

11. Any relevant financial, equalities, legal, information technology, crime & disorder, sustainability or other implications will be addressed in the final report submitted to the Executive.

Risk Management

12. There are no known risks associated with the recommendations in this report for the Scrutiny Committee to consider other than noting and ensuring that timescale for completion is tight and will need to be closely managed in order to ensure it is met.

Contact Details

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Report Approved**Date**

13 April 2022

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

None

Wards Affected:

For further information please contact the author of the report.

All

**Background Papers:** None**Annexes:**

Annex 1 – Scoping Report: School Holiday Food Scrutiny Review