

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy and Resources
DATE	1 February 2018
REPORT TITLE	Towards a Fairer Aberdeen – Provision of meals to children during school holidays
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/322
DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
REPORT AUTHOR	Neil Carnegie

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

- 1.1 This report proposes a framework to enable provision of free meals to school children during school holidays supporting the recommendation within the Council's strategy 'Towards a Fairer Aberdeen that Prospers for all' that Aberdeen City Council should work with a range of community organisations to develop community based solutions to address the needs of children facing food poverty during the school holidays and ensuring that no child goes hungry.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Committee is recommended to:

- a) Agree the proposed framework for providing school meals to school children during school holidays, subject to securing budget allocation which will be determined through the Council 2018/19 budget setting process.
- b) Delegate power to the Head of Communities and Housing, in consultation with the Head of Finance to approve funding grants for the purpose of providing meals and activities to school children during school holidays, any such funding award to be subject to an agreement approved by the Head of Commercial and Procurement Services.
- c) Instructs the Head of Communities and Housing to engage the Fairer Aberdeen Board and Locality Partnerships seeking their involvement to determine their role in agreeing funding allocations and subsequent monitoring.
- d) Instruct the Head of Communities and Housing to report back to the Finance, Policy and Resources committee within fifteen months on the delivery of the programme.

3. MAIN ISSUES

3.1 Background

3.1.1 There is broad recognition that delivering a mix of good food provision and enrichment opportunities outside the school calendar year not only helps alleviate hunger but it can support working parents and those struggling with family food budgets in pressured holiday periods. It can also raise children's aspirations, offers safety and give opportunities for fun and socialising.

3.1.2 The Council sets out its commitment to alleviating child hunger in its strategy 'Towards a Fairer Aberdeen that Prospers for all':

Aberdeen City Council should work with a range of community organisations to develop community based solutions to address the needs of children facing food poverty during the school holidays and ensuring that no child goes hungry.

3.1.3 The 2016/17 school survey reported that 8,012 school children in the city were registered for free schools meals, representing 36% of all of school children. 6,240 of children registered for school meals were in primary 1 – 3 with all children in this banding entitled to a free school meal.

3.1.4 At its meeting on 9 March 2017, the Finance, Policy and Resources committee determined to pilot provision of free meals to school children in three areas during the summer 2017. Pilots were undertaken and a report on these considered by the committee on 6 December 2017. The Finance, Policy and Resources committee on that date requested officers submit a further report setting out a plan for providing free meals to school children during school holidays and the budget requirements to deliver this.

3.2 Key learning from the Pilots

3.2.1 Pilot activity was undertaken in Torry, Woodside and Cummings Park with 1,734 free meals provided to children. The majority of meals provided were to children entitled to free school meals. The average cost per meal provided was £3.66, this included the cost of food and cooking, and, cleaning and janitorial costs.

3.2.2 The approach taken was highly regarded by participants and parents with 98.4% of parents indicating that their child enjoyed attending, and 86% of children attending stating they were happy with the experience.

3.2.3 The pilot programme confirmed the importance of providing activities alongside food provision. Also it further demonstrated the significant contribution charities, community groups and business can and are already making to supporting a sustainable future programme.

3.3 Proposed approach

- 3.3.1 We should aim to provide up to a total of 10,000 meals to school children over the summer, October and festive holidays 2018/19.
- 3.3.2 Meal provision will be delivered by a blended approach which favours, supports and empowers communities to deliver the food and activity programmes. However, the Council shall directly deliver where there is insufficient community capacity in priority neighbourhoods to deliver programmes. In doing so the Council will work with these communities to develop future capacity.
- 3.3.3 Regardless of means of delivery the following principles will be applied:
- 3.3.4 Community development and community empowerment.
- 3.3.5 Meals will meet relevant nutritional and health standards.
For example – Food for Life.
- 3.3.6 Meals will be delivered alongside activity programmes. Evidence indicates that programmes are most effective when meals and activities are delivered together.
- 3.3.7 Meals will be provided free of charge to school children participating in the programmes. Restricting to children only registered for free school meals will deter children from participating and be challenging to administer, particularly for community groups.
- 3.3.8 Neighbourhoods areas with highest concentrations of children registered for free school meals will be priority.
- 3.3.9 We propose to develop a community funding programme which will invite funding requests from community groups to deliver meal and activity programmes. We will invite the Fairer Aberdeen Board and Locality Planning Partnerships to help design this with the intention that community representatives are involved determining funding allocations and subsequent monitoring. The community role would be intended to support participatory budgeting aspirations.
- 3.3.10 We are actively working with CFINE (Community Food Initiatives North East) to plan and deliver our proposed approach. CFINE is a local social enterprise and charity aiming to Improve Health and Wellbeing, and delivers its business for community benefit.
- 3.3.11 CFINE operates FareShare Grampian, a franchise of FareShare UK, which distributes fresh, quality, and in-date surplus from the food industry (including supermarkets and food producers) that would otherwise go to waste. Food distributed by FareShare is significantly increasing and CFINE would intend to support our plans by providing food direct to community groups and to the Council for free meal provision.
- 3.3.13 CFINE also operate Cook at the 'Nook having secured funding through the Landfill Community Fund to build a Community Training Kitchen at its

premises in Aberdeen. Community volunteers preparing meals as a part of our programme may be trained at this facility.

3.3.14 We anticipate that the Council provision and support could be significant, certainly in the short term to medium term. Community development officers will have a key role in developing programmes. We anticipate using secondary schools within priority neighbourhoods as hubs for activities and preparation and provision of meals. We will be seeking catering and janitorial volunteers to work paid additional hours to meet staffing requirements.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 A maximum £35,000 will be requested to deliver up to 10,000 meals.

4.2 A further £15,000 will be requested to support delivery of activities play, sports, youth work, etc running alongside the meal provision.

4.3 Allocation of funding will be determined by the 2018/19 budget setting process.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no significant direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5.2 Terms of reference will be developed for the decision making group and following public pound requirements will be met.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

6.1 Financial

6.1.1 There is a risk that the Council approves the approach but insufficient funding allocation is made in the 2018/19 budget. There is a medium risk that this will happen. The programme will not go ahead or be scaled back should requested funding not be secured.

6.2 Employee

6.2.1 There is risk that insufficient staff resources are available to support delivery of the programme. This risk is low. We will aim to maximise community groups delivering the programme. Where the Council requires to deliver elements of the programme, facilities staff (janitorial, cooks and cleaning) will be asked to volunteer to work additional paid hours. Community development staff will schedule appropriate time, balancing this with other work demands to support the programme planning and delivery.

6.3 Customer / citizen – no risks identified

6.4 Environmental – no risks identified

6.5 Technological – no risks identified

6.6 Legal – no risks identified

6.7 Reputational

6.7.1 The Council makes a commitment through its strategy 'Towards a Fairer Aberdeen that Prospers for all' to address hunger. Failing to deliver relevant initiatives to support this may lead to reputational damage. This risk is assessed as low and mitigated by approving to implement the proposal.

7. IMPACT SECTION

7.1 Economy

7.1.1 The Council aims to support improvement in the local economy to ensure a high quality of life for all people in Aberdeen. This proposal will impact on quality of life improvements for children by providing meals and activities during holiday periods, where otherwise they may suffer from the effects of poverty and hunger which have a direct correlation to poor educational attainment.

7.2 People

7.2.1 The Council is committed to improving the key life outcomes of all people in Aberdeen and so has agreed a set of Equality Outcomes (2017-21). This proposal will impact on people via supporting families, providing free meals and activities for children during school holiday periods. This proposal is inclusive and open to all children, irrespective of protected characteristics. This proposal will have a positive impact upon children and families who are experiencing poverty.

7.2.2 This proposal will improve the staff experience by ensuring staff have the necessary resources to support families in need.

7.3 Place

7.3.1 The proposal has a positive impact on the environment in terms of working with families to increase community resilience and cohesion. Children and families will meet new friends and build new support networks.

7.4 Technology

7.4.1 There is no impact on technology.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

CHI/17/132 Towards A Fairer Aberdeen That Prospers For All 2017 – 20 - 'Food and Fun'(6 December 2017)

CHI/17/004 Towards A Fairer Aberdeen That Prospers For All 2017-20 (9 March 2017)

CHI 16/2831 Tackling Food Poverty – Update Report (1 December 2016)

CHI/16/003 Sustainable Food Cities

CHI/16/187 Sustainable Food Cities - Tackling Food Poverty.
Filling The Holiday Gap (Update 2015) - All-Party Parliamentary Group on
Hunger
Deprivation In Aberdeen City, An analysis of the Scottish Index of Multiple
Deprivation 2016, ACC Research and Information Team
Poverty In Aberdeen City, produced by ACC Research and Information Team
A Scotland without fuel Poverty is a fairer Scotland, Report of the Scottish
Fuel Poverty Strategic Group to the Scottish Government
A Scotland without Poverty, Dr Jim McCormack, Joseph Rowntree
Foundation, February 2016
Dignity, Ending Hunger Together In Scotland, The Report of the Independent
Working Group on Food Poverty, June 2016
Empowering Scotland's Cities, June 2016

9. APPENDICES

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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