

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education Operational Delivery Committee
<b>DATE</b>	16 May 2019
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Free School Meals
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	OPE/19/250
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Rob Polkinghorne
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Graeme Simpson
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Caroline Johnstone and Martin Smith
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	Purpose 1

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 On 1 February 2018 the Finance, Policy & Resources Committee instructed the Head of Communities and Housing to report back to Committee within 15 months on the delivery of the programme to supply free school meals during school holidays.
- 1.2 On 19 April 2018 the Education Operational Delivery Committee instructed the Chief Officer Integrated Children's Services to bring a report to Committee prior to the close of each school year:
- a. detailing the numbers registered for and taking free school meals by school  
and
  - b. assessing the progress made by implementing the new work streams and detailing any required adjustments for the following school year

This report aims to satisfy both Committee requests.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

That Committee:

- 2.1 Note the increase in the number of children and young people registered for free school meals;
- 2.2 Instruct the Chief Operating Officer to monitor the impact of the future work of each workstream outlined in this report;
- 2.3 Note the evaluation of the programme to deliver free school meals during school holidays;
- 2.4 Note the evaluation of the Food & Fun Programme for 2018/19; and
- 2.5 Instruct the Chief Officer – Early Intervention & Community Empowerment to continue with the Food & Fun concept but examine alternative models of delivery which are less staff resource intensive.

### **3.1 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1.1 The number of children registered for free school meals directly informs levels of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding. Publicly funded primary, secondary and special schools will receive £1,200 in 2019/20 for each child in Primary 1 to S3, or equivalent, who is registered for free school meals under national eligibility criteria.
- 3.1.2 Pupil Equity Funding is allocated to schools on the basis of the estimated number of children and young people in P1-S3 registered for free school meals under the national eligibility criteria.

- Funding for P1 to P3 pupils is calculated using the percentage of pupils receiving free school meals from the Healthy Living Survey (2014) and the school roll from the most recent Pupil Census (2018) data.
- Funding for P4 to S3 pupils is calculated using the percentage of pupils receiving free school meals from the most recent Healthy Living Survey (2018) and the school roll from the most recent Pupil Census (2018) data.
- The funding for special schools is calculated using the number of special school pupils in the P1-S3 age range registered for free school meals and the school roll from the most recent Pupil Census (2018) data.

All P1 to P3 pupils receive free school meals therefore 2014 is the last year for which Healthy Living Survey data is available to indicate updates in this group.

- 3.1.3 The Scottish Government keep the means of estimating free school meal registrations under review in order to improve the quality of data for identifying children living in households affected by poverty although methodologies are as yet unchanged. Officers anticipate that the use of an alternative

methodology will increase the allocations made available as the 2014 survey does not reflect the impact of Oil and Gas on the local economy.

### 3.1.4 Number of children registered for free school meals and allocations of PEF funding

<b>Year</b>	<b>No of primary children registered for FSMs and PEF allocation</b>	<b>No of secondary young people registered for FSMs</b>	<b>No of children in special schools registered for FSM</b>	<b>Total Number and allocation</b>
<b>2017/2018</b>	1,767 £2,120,400	464 £556,800	26 £31,200	2,257 £2,708,400
<b>2018/2019</b>	1,841 £2,245,800	462 £557,520	33 £41,760	2,336 £2,845,080
<b>2019/2020</b>	1,770 £2,187,600	562 £679,680	26 £35,640	2,358 £2,902,920 <b>Increase of £57,840</b>

## 3.2 Application/Registration Improvements 2018/2019

- 3.2.1 With only modest gains linked to the awareness raising campaigns, work has been done to improve the application process. The application process for Free School Meals has been combined with the Council's application process for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. This has resulted in an additional 830 children registered for free school meals. This data was not considered for pupil equity funding by the Scottish Government as it was captured too late for the September 2018 census. At the Aberdeen City Council budget meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup> 2019 the Chief Operating Officer was instructed to contact the Deputy First Minister with regards to this, asking him to reconsider the decision taken. The local authority is currently awaiting a response.
- 3.2.2 Given the success outlined in 3.2.1 above, future additions to the paper claim forms for Council Tax and Housing Benefit will be considered to include other entitlements such as Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), School Clothing Grants (SCG) and Access to Leisure.
- 3.2.3 Following the successful launch of the digital school admissions and placing requests in January 2019, there is an opportunity to link to the free school meal registration. This would be specifically relevant for applicants to P4 and above. The specific changes to the application will be considered to align with the 2020 application cycle.

3.2.4 The digitisation of the free school meals application is in the final stages of development and testing with a scheduled release by the end of April 2019 ready for the new school term along with Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), school clothing grants and school transport requests.

### **3.3 THE PROVISION OF FREE SCHOOL MEALS OVER HOLIDAY PERIODS**

3.3.1 The proposed framework, commonly known as Food and Fun was to provide up to a total of 10,000 meals to school children over the summer, October and festive holidays 2018/19. A blended approach supporting communities to deliver food and activity programmes would be used and Aberdeen City Council would directly deliver where there was insufficient capacity in priority neighbourhoods to provide programmes.

3.3.2 The changes to be tested were as follows:

- The Council work with CFINE to utilise fair share food in the programme, likewise other organisations and businesses who may provide free or discounted food for the programme.
- We will organise and deliver Food and Fun programme with partners in priority Localities where there is insufficient delivery by community groups.
- We will support communities to develop their capability and capacity to deliver programmes in the future.
  
- Community groups providing activities shall be invited to take children to schools in priority localities where food will be prepared.
- Aberdeen City Council has allocated £50,000 in 2018/19 for the provision of free meals. Community groups/social enterprises will be invited and supported to seek grants to deliver free food and activities.
- Provide welfare advice type services alongside the programme.

3.3.3 During the holiday programmes for both Summer and October, the programme saw meals provided at: -

- Northfield Academy, Northfield
- Riverbank Primary, Tillydrone
- Tullos Primary, Torry

supported by ACC Communities Team staff along with partner agencies Sport Aberdeen through their Active Schools Co-ordinators, coaches, volunteers and senior pupil leaders, Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust coaches and volunteers and ACC Youth Work and Family Learning workers.

3.3.4 All food was provided through CFINE with as much as possible provided through FareShare. Hot meals were provided Monday/Wednesday/ Friday with 'Build your own Sandwich' – where all the ingredients to make a sandwich are put on tables for children to make their own sandwich – on Tuesday and Thursdays. ACC catering cooks provided the hot meal days and kitchen assistants on sandwich days. Roughly 25% of hot meal costs and 50% of

packed lunch costs were provided through FareShare and therefore technically free.

Hot meals were also provided at Seaton Primary supported by volunteers from Seaton Church with ACC catering staff cooking meals.

Packed lunches, again provided by CFINE, were provided to the Big Noise project in Torry and Transition Extreme project run together with Police Scotland. Snacks and drinks were provided to 10 sessions of the play sessions run through Aberdeen Play Forum.

The Council provided grants to Middlefield Community Project and Woodside centre Association to provide meals.

The totals of meals provided exceeded the actual attendances – catering was for 60 children/parents (of nursery children) daily but attendances did not always meet that. Children were afforded opportunities for more helpings if wanted and wherever possible food was given home with parents when children were collected. This was not always possible due to following rules for hot food and allergens.

3.3.5 Activities played a major part of the programme and a range of sports, team games, and arts & crafts were available daily. Additional activities were arranged by individual sites and included visits from Scottish Fire and Rescue, Police Scotland, Aberdeen Science Centre, sporting specialists including gymnastics, boxing, Taekwondo, Ibike sessions, and Hip-Hop dance. Children all had different favourite activities and in general all activities were very well received.

### 3.3.6 Festive Programme

Through the established partnership approach, two events were organised to cover the festive break. Sport Aberdeen organised an event at the Lynx Ice Arena/Beach Leisure Centre on 24 December 2018 which focussed on ice skating and physical activity/Arts & Crafts and Face Painting. The food for this event was organised through CFINE which culminated in a soup/sandwich lunch.

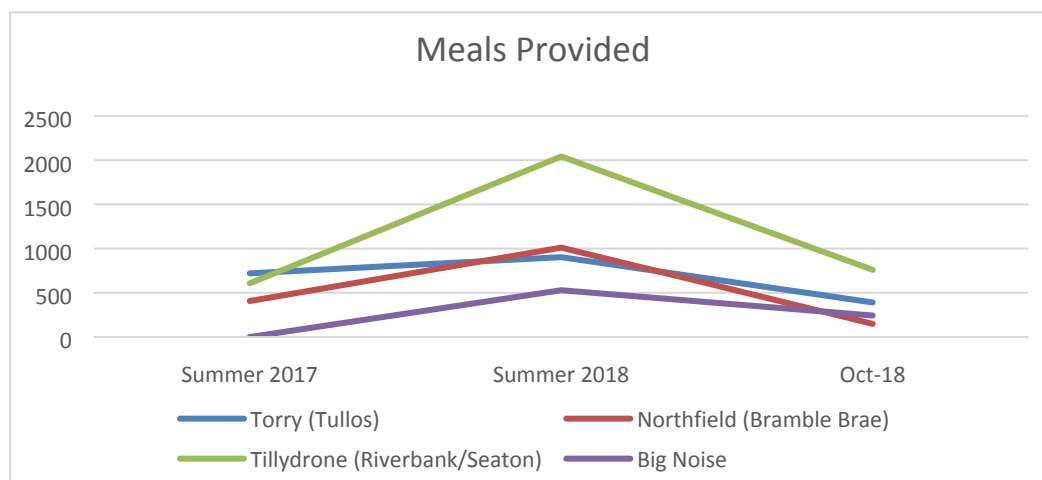
On 27 December 2018, another event was organised at Pittodrie Stadium by Aberdeen FC Community Trust. More Arts/Crafts and a Christmas Disco was provided with the children then meeting Santa and first team player, Niall McGinn. The macaroni and cheese was prepared and delivered by Sodexo.

300 meals were provided over the two sessions with food parcels provided for the other three days through CFINE's FareShare Scheme.

The children participating gave the meals provided an overall satisfaction rating of 100% (satisfied/highly satisfied). School staff have also reported that the children who participated in the programme returned to school more enthusiastic, motivated and attentive.

## Cumulative Meals Provided

10,699



## Recognition

25th Aberdeen Sports Awards – Community Sports Project of the Year – 4 October 2018

University of Aberdeen Principal's Award for Outstanding Service to the Community – Installation of new Principal/Vice Chancellor Ceremony – 16 January 2019.

Notwithstanding the success of the programme, it has been resource intensive. We have applied considerable staffing to this project which has meant kitchen staff working during their holiday time off and the impact on our locality Communities staff has been extensive. With summer holidays close upon us, we will work with partners to develop an alternative method of delivery.

## 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are positive financial implications resulting from increasing the number of parents and carers registering their child for free school meals. PEF is allocated on the basis of £1,200 per child registered. All local authorities are currently planning to maximise their free school meals registration and uptake and if we do not take similar action our allocation could be reduced.

In terms of Food & Fun, the Council have committed £45,000 in this year's budget with the additional £5,000 which was awarded by the University of Aberdeen, in recognising the value of the programme.

- 4.2 The Deputy First Minister wrote to Local Authorities on 17 April 2019 advising changes to the eligibility criteria for free school meals. The threshold for free school meals for 19/20 has been increased in line with an increase in the

National Living Wage to protect the eligibility of those families currently in receipt of free school meals through receipt of both Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit who would otherwise have been most affected by the increase in the National Living Wage. Further incremental increases in this threshold will be made, in line with increases in the National Living Wage, until 2022/23. Assurance has been given by Revenues and Benefits colleagues that these changes will have no impact on the number of pupils eligible for free school meals, rather they will maintain the status quo and therefore there are no financial implications for the Council.

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
<b>Financial</b>	<p>Loss of Scottish Government available income to schools</p> <p>Increased uptake has the potential need to purchase additional catering equipment</p>	<p>H</p> <p>H</p>	<p>Increase uptake through registration at the appropriate touch points.</p> <p>Identify budget for potential additional costs</p>
<b>Legal</b>	None	L	None
<b>Employee</b>	<p>Reduced allocation of PEF limits the targeted interventions that can be provided to support children.</p> <p>Increased uptake has the potential for the need to increase catering staffing levels.</p> <p>Food &amp; Fun involves considerable staff resources during holiday periods with resources are stretched.</p>	<p>M</p> <p>M-H</p> <p>M</p>	<p>Increase uptake through registration at the appropriate touch points.</p> <p>Identify budget for potential additional costs</p> <p>Explore alternative models of delivery for summer and beyond.</p>

<b>Customer</b>	Children are disadvantaged and not offered targeted supports required in order to close attainment gap.	H	Increase uptake through registration at the appropriate touch points.
<b>Environment</b>	Increased uptake puts further pressure on already congested dining areas.	M-H	Identify budget for potential additional costs.
<b>Technology</b>	Data Protection	H	Ensuring GDPR regulations are fully adhered to.
<b>Reputational</b>	Not effectively addressing the Pupil Equity Funding agenda could present a reputational risk to the Council in terms of how effectively it works to close the poverty related attainment gap. Effective, close monitoring of impact will enable the Council to positively report on progress made in closing the poverty related attainment gap.	H	Increase uptake through registration at the appropriate touch points.

## 7. OUTCOMES

<b>Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Prosperous Economy</b>	Securing the total funds available from the Scottish Government Pupil Equity Fund. Improvements in attainment will help break the cycle of deprivation and support developing the young workforce. These changes will positively impact on our economy and support the theme of Aberdeen Prosperers.
<b>Prosperous People</b>	Food poverty remains a fundamental challenge within the refreshed LOIP, allowing interventions to be sourced and implemented to secure closing the poverty attainment related gap. This approach has potential to significantly and positively impact on a



	number of individuals as support will be tailored to their very individual needs.
<b>Prosperous Place</b>	The plans take account of local need and will have a positive impact on individual communities across Aberdeen City.
<b>Enabling Technology</b>	The digitisation of a service.

<b>Design Principles of Target Operating Model</b>	
	<b>Impact of Report</b>
<b>Customer Service Design</b>	Allows schools to access all available funds from Pupil Equity Fund
<b>Organisational Design</b>	Increased registration of free school meals will increase allocation of PEF and allow partners to collaborate in planning targeted interventions for children and young people.
<b>Governance</b>	Quality assurance processes ensure that PEF spending is linked directly to improving outcomes for children.
<b>Workforce</b>	The workforce will have increased access to resource to support vulnerable learners.
<b>Process Design</b>	Digitisation of the service will bring significant efficiencies to current process.
<b>Technology</b>	Digitisation of the service
<b>Partnerships and Alliances</b>	Partners help shape interventions provided through PEF.

## 8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>Equality &amp; Human Rights Impact Assessment</b>	Full EHRIA required
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	Required
<b>Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty</b>	Applicable

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

CHI/17/322 Towards a Fairer Aberdeen – Provision of meals to children during school holidays (1 February 2018).

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

## **10. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 PEF Methodology Diagram

## **11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS**

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