

Review of the School Food Strategy



Background

- The School Food Strategy was initiated as a result of the findings of the School Meals Scrutiny Task Group published in Summer 2006
- The following were involved in the creation of the final Strategy document:
 - Schools (esp. PHF, WASSH and Schools Forum)
 - SNAG (School Nutrition Action Group)
 - Local farmers/producers
 - Wiltshire PCT
 - Wiltshire LA Early Years Lead
 - Wiltshire LA Procurement and Contracts Team
 - Sodexo
- The *School Food Strategy* was published in Summer 2007 and every school in Wiltshire was distributed a copy.

Scrutiny

- The School Meals Strategy Co-ordinator has reported twice on progress made with the School Food Strategy to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee in:
- January 2008
- September 2008
- Copies of both reports are available

School Food Task Group Focus Areas

- 1) To examine the Government's Nutrient Based Standards, and understand the challenges they pose;
- 2) To identify how many Secondary and Special schools in Wiltshire need to make plans to build or share modern food technology facilities and equipment
- 3) Examine the general impact of making learning to cook and understand the principles of diet and nutrition an entitlement for 11-18 year olds
- 4) Discuss the role of Schools Forum in promoting the School Food Strategy
- 5) Understand the principles underlying the new school contract; ie, how best to secure buy-in from schools, what is the supply/demand for alternative food delivery methods

1) To examine the Government's Nutrient Based Standards, and understand the challenges they pose

- The requirement for schools to comply with the Nutrient-based Standards for School Lunches (2008) was included in the School Food Strategy (Objective 1.4)
- As reported to Scrutiny in September 2008, it was felt that this objective of the Strategy is 'ongoing'. Primary schools should be compliant now, indications were from quick email surveys carried out in Summer 2008, most 'opted out' schools were undecided as how to proceed
- Full details in my next presentation!

2) To identify how many Secondary and Special schools in Wiltshire need to make plans to build or share modern food technology facilities and equipment

- There isn't a specific objective included in the School Food Strategy to cover this area. The best match is Objective 2.1:

'Schools will ensure that all young people are able to understand what constitutes healthy eating at each Key Stage and are able to prepare a healthy meal by the time they leave Secondary school'

- As reported to Scrutiny in September 2008, it was felt that this objective of the Strategy is 'ongoing'. With the changes to the Secondary curriculum, with a new emphasis on practical cookery, time is still needed to meet this objective. The ability to meet this objective is also dependent on having the right teaching spaces!
- The DCSF has since made funding available for the LA to build new food tech facilities where they are needed.
- There were 4 eligible schools; Larkrise, Exeter House, Downlands, and Bishop Wordsworth's Grammar.
- A bid has been made for this funding to assist these schools.
- Nigel Hunt will have the details!

3) Examine the general impact of making learning to cook and understand the principles of diet and nutrition an entitlement for 11-18 year olds

- As before, this area is covered by Objective 2.1 of the *School Food Strategy*
- In my report to Scrutiny in September 2008, I highlighted the national scheme 'Licence to Cook', a programme of food education which was due to be launched in Secondary and Special Schools from September 2008.
- Provisional findings of the School Food Audit 2008, sent out to Secondary and Special schools in October show out of the 17 responses received (out of 32 schools):
 - Only 5 schools knew about 'Licence to Cook'
 - Only 3 school had plans to implement it (Pewsey Vale, Rowdeford and St. Edmund's Girls)
 - Only 10 schools wished further information about it!
 - A specific objective for the promotion and use of this initiative will be included in the revised *School Food Strategy*

4) Discuss the role of Schools Forum in promoting the School Food Strategy

- As mentioned previously, Schools Forum has been one of the key stakeholders in the *School Food Strategy*
- There isn't a specific objective in the *School Food Strategy* regarding Schools Forum, however they are referred to as having responsibility for helping implement the following objectives in the *School Food Strategy Action Plan*:
 - 1. Policy (1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6)
 - 2. Resources (5.1, 5.2)
 - 3. Contract (6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5)
 - 4. Monitoring and Evaluation (7.1)
- They have passed on information to schools through their contact network regarding funding opportunities for kitchens and the new school food regulations.
- It is intended that an objective relating to the role of Schools Forum be included in the revised strategy.

5) Understand the principles underlying the new school contract; ie, how best to secure buy-in from schools, what is the supply/demand for alternative food delivery methods

- This area is covered by all objectives in the Contract section of the *School Food Strategy*
- As reported to Scrutiny in September 2008, the majority of the objectives relating to contract issues are 'ongoing'.
- As an extension to the existing contract was agreed in February 2008 until March 2010, this has delayed consultation with schools on the future aspects of a new school meals contract.
- It is anticipated that the market will be approached in 2009, with regards to the new contract

- The Schools Meals Strategy Co-ordinator has not approached schools to find out their views, but possible issues may include:
- Use of local produce / suppliers (where viable)
- Other sustainability issues (food miles, energy efficiency etc)
- Length of contract
- Menu flexibility (NBS permitting)
- Potential opportunity of investment in infrastructure from contractor