
Report to: Resources & Audit Committee

Date of Meeting: 4 December 2014

Subject: Evaluation of Summer Holiday Lunch Scheme

Report by: Head of Strategy and Customer Services

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with an evaluation of the summer holiday lunch scheme, which was piloted over the summer holiday period of 30 June 2014 to 18 August 2014.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Committee notes:
- 2.1.1. the report, commenting and challenging as appropriate;
- 2.1.2. given the discretionary nature of the service and associated costs, that a decision to repeat a similar summer lunch club scheme in 2015 should be considered within the context of forthcoming budgetary deliberations.

3.0 Considerations

Background

- 3.1. When it met in October 2013, Council agreed to provide access to a healthy lunch every week day during the 2014 summer holiday for all primary school children who are entitled to free school meals.
- 3.2. During May/June 2014 primary schoolchildren in Clackmannanshire received information on the scheme and eligible families were encouraged to register.
- 3.3. In June 2014, Council accepted a model for delivery of the scheme. It was agreed that daily lunch bags would be prepared by Class Cuisine in accordance with nutritional guidelines and in compliance with food handling and storage legislation. These were to be distributed daily to various community organisations and venues across Clackmannanshire (further details in Appendix A), with participating families exchanging previously issued vouchers for lunch bags on a daily basis.

Evaluation

- 3.4. By the start of the summer holidays, 168 primary school children were registered for the scheme out of a possible 972 eligible for free school meals (17.3%). Small numbers of additional children were registered during the course of the holidays. The highest number registered was 171 in week 2 of the holidays and the lowest number being 119 in week 7.
- 3.5. In general, feedback on the registration process was positive: parents and community groups indicated that the registration process was relatively simple and straightforward. Some parents, however, did not receive a letter and one family experienced a delay in receiving their vouchers.
- 3.6. Actual uptake of the lunch bags by those families registered was sporadic (details in Appendix A). It was common for families to cease using the service without notification, or to use it on occasional days only, again without prior notice. Over the course of the school holidays, the average take-up was 54%. Out of a total of 5490 meals prepared, 2968 were collected by registered families.
- 3.7. It was always expected that a scheme of this nature would incur wastage, however, the levels of unpredictability experienced were far greater than anticipated. Whenever possible, uncollected lunch bags were redistributed to vulnerable people in the community to keep the level of wastage as low as possible. If the pilot were to be repeated, therefore, ways would have to be found to significantly reduce waste without disproportionately increasing the costs of administration.
- 3.8. A summary of feedback from parents and delivery partners is detailed in Appendix B, from which there are lessons to be learned. The most common reasons given for non collection of lunch bags included:
 - sandwich filling choices were limited and some were unappealing to children, particularly after a number of weeks;
 - children sometimes received bottles of water but would prefer fruit juice;
 - the collection period happened over lunchtime which wasn't always convenient for families going out for the day;
 - some children simply became bored of the lunches.
- 3.9. In the main, surplus lunch bags did not go to waste and were distributed to other service users and vulnerable people at the discretion of the participating facility. In many cases, where there was excess, lunch bags were distributed to younger and older siblings who were not primary school age and therefore not strictly eligible to the scheme.
- 3.10. Feedback shows that in some cases, the scheme resulted in wider social benefits. Many of the community groups found that the lunch scheme helped them to make families aware of play schemes, free swimming, park play sessions and fun days. This resulted in increased activity and better social inclusion for parents and children. In one case an unregistered young carer was identified and support was provided.

- 3.11. The cost of providing lunch bags over the 7 weeks of the school holidays amounted to £7,960. This cost does not include officer administration, support costs and volunteer time. Unpaid community group support and assistance was provided in some communities and the goodwill of volunteers played a crucial role in delivering this pilot scheme. It is estimated that 160 hours of Council officer time was dedicated to setting up and administering the pilot lunch scheme.
- 3.12. Suggestions for improving the scheme if it were to be repeated were varied and included; co-ordination with food banks to uplift surplus food; more weekly contact with families to check if lunches are required (which would result in significant additional administration costs); a longer registration period to maximise the time available for registration and procurement; more consultation with children on foods that they like; extending the collection period and/or allowing early morning collection; and, offering vulnerable families food vouchers to use in supermarkets instead.

Changes to free school meal legislation

- 3.13. From January 2015, all primary 1, 2 and 3 children in Clackmannanshire will be eligible to a free school meal each lunchtime during school term. All children are eligible and no financial assessment is required. This may make it more difficult to identify children to target for any future summer holiday lunch scheme should this pilot scheme be repeated.

Conclusions

- 3.14. The summer holiday lunch scheme pilot provided a weekday food resource to support vulnerable families in Clackmannanshire during the 7 week summer holidays.
- 3.15. The principle of free lunches was well received by most participating families and community groups, actual uptake was low (17% of eligible families) and only just over half 54% of lunch bags were received by those they were intended for. That said, feedback suggests that most bags were not wasted but sensibly distributed to other vulnerable groups, including siblings of those eligible, and there were a number wider social and support benefits were realised as a direct result of the scheme that would not otherwise have come about.
- 3.16. Whilst there clearly is some demand and support for such a service, there is strong evidence to suggest that demand is significantly below the levels anticipated. It is also clear that, for families who do use the scheme, their needs are often wider than primary school aged children.
- 3.17. If the scheme were to be repeated, though an element of planning unpredictability would need to be accepted as an inherent consequence, waste levels would need to be reduced significantly.
- 3.18. Uptake could be increased to a limited extent by increasing the registration period, and though the quality was generally good, waste could be reduced by providing more fruit juice options, and ensuring sandwich fillings were more akin to the plainer tastes of some children. A pre-survey of potential users may also be helpful. An additional measure would be to increase contact with

participating families during the scheme, and increase the collection window to include earlier in the day, though both would likely require additional administration and increase costs.

- 3.19. Community groups could not be secured in a number of communities to assist with the scheme, therefore, Council Community Access Points and staff were often heavily relied upon.
- 3.20. The introduction of free school meals for P1-3 will make it more difficult to identify eligible children in the future, therefore, were the scheme to be repeated, another form of identifying and registering vulnerable families may need to be used.
- 3.21. Any decision to repeat the scheme would be taken on priority-based budget deliberations for 2015-16. Should Council wish to continue with the scheme, there may be some merit in considering an approach that would request CTSI to work with the 3rd sector in Clackmannanshire to build a partnership to deliver a lunch scheme for vulnerable families. The Council could contribute a fixed sum, with other community organisations also putting in resources. This would reduce the administrative and support burden on the Council, which is likely unsustainable, and enable voluntary groups to attract wider funding that wouldn't be accessible to a local authority.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

- 4.1. There are no direct sustainability implications arising from this report.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. Financial Details.

The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes

- 5.2. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes

- 5.3. *Staffing- there are no direct implications arising from this report.*

6.0 Exempt Reports

- 6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box)

- The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses
- Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive
- People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment
- Our communities are safer
- Vulnerable people and families are supported
- Substance misuse and its effects are reduced
- Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing
- The environment is protected and enhanced for all
- The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

8.0 Equalities Impact

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes No n/a in this instance.

9.0 Legality

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

a) Appendix 1 - Summer Holiday Lunch Scheme Uptake

b) Appendix 2 - Community Partner and Parent Comments

11.0 Background Papers

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes (please list the documents below) No

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Appendix 1

Free Summer Holiday Lunch Uptake, 2014

	Week							Total Provided	Total Available	% Uptake
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
Tullibody (THL)	57	70	47	65	70	78	87	474	915	52%
Alva CAP	26	57	59	22	23	21	19	227	405	56%
Sauchie Active 8	120	130	113	36	33	26	27	485	840	58%
Clackmannan CAP	31	43	40	36	39	27	21	237	470	50%
Alloa Homestart	108	89	123	62	78	53	83	596	1115	53%
Alloa Hawkhill	78	40	36	40	86	79	66	425	795	53%
Tillicoultry Ben Cleuch	63	63	63	54	64	56	52	415	715	58%
Coalsnaughton Hall	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	40	5%
Menstrie CAP	21	18	20	17	15	16	0	107	195	55%
Total	506	510	501	332	408	356	355	2968	5490	54%

Appendix 2

Partner Comments

Organisation	How could the registration and voucher process be improved?	How could either the deliveries or quality of food be improved?	Did you identify other benefits from the scheme? i.e. make contact with new families, identify further support requirements for families etc.	Do you have any overall comments, feedback or suggestions on the scheme?
Clackmannan CAP	Personalised vouchers to eliminate waste. Better daily monitoring of the scheme.	N/A		Co-ordinate with food banks to uplift surplus lunches daily. Too much waste. Food waste bin should be supplied as we promote the disposal of waste via our service.
Menstrie CAP	Process was straight forward.	Delivery and quality of food was good.		Think it was a shame that not everyone picked up the meals everyday
Alva CAP	Provide contact details to check if service is required on a weekly update.	Sometimes choice was limited and one filling was unsuitable for children.	Surplus was used to help people who did not qualify but require help/assistance, example extra children in family, unemployed or elderly on benefits.	More contact with the families to ensure they still want to participate week to week. Longer time distribution to allow access to pick up location.

Organisation	How could the registration and voucher process be improved?	How could either the deliveries or quality of food be improved?	Did you identify other benefits from the scheme? i.e. make contact with new families, identify further support requirements for families etc.	Do you have any overall comments, feedback or suggestions on the scheme?
Hawkhill Community Association		<p>Children do NOT like savoury cheese & coleslaw, cream cheese & chives, tomato or chicken mayo in their rolls. Did not know what a pear was. They liked ham or chicken roll, bananas and biscuits.</p> <p>Cream crackers were broken by the time the bags arrived.</p> <p>Not enough ham delivered, small sausages were lovely, but scotch eggs were not nice. Children thought chives were grass and picked it out. Juice was very popular, water was not.</p>	<p>One family had 2 younger children who also received a bag from us as the family benefits had been stopped.</p> <p>One family came along to our summer play scheme & youth club.</p> <p>One lady has now come to our cafe on a daily basis.</p> <p>Left over bags were given out to younger children and homeless volunteers.</p>	Good idea but consult with young people on the types of foods that they like.
Tullibody Healthy Living	If the flyers to parents could be given out sooner in order that all families were made aware (some parents said they didn't know about it).	If families could choose the sandwiches and order them beforehand. That way we wouldn't have some kids say they don't like the "choices" left.	<p>We made good use of the surplus lunch bags by giving them to children in Tron Court (with parents permission). Three of these families then registered with the scheme.</p> <p>We were able to promote the St Serfs Summer Play scheme to those children/parents collecting lunches.</p>	

Organisation	How could the registration and voucher process be improved?	How could either the deliveries or quality of food be improved?	Did you identify other benefits from the scheme? i.e. make contact with new families, identify further support requirements for families etc.	Do you have any overall comments, feedback or suggestions on the scheme?
Ben Cleuch		Better fillings for children, more variety, shortbread, pancakes, bland	Surplus bags given to people identified e.g. homeless, Benefits.	
Sauchie Active 8		More variety	Surplus Lunches given to those in need.	
Home-Start Alloa	Guidelines for everyone on how to use vouchers, sign and date back of them, do we return vouchers or give back to families daily etc. clarification on the process so we are all doing the same thing.	<p>Repetition of sandwiches and not enough choice, otherwise fine. Children appeared to favour meat and were disappointed if these had gone.</p> <p>Class Cuisine adapted delivery to suit our organisation without making us feel we were unreasonable. We were delighted with this.</p> <p>More choices of food or conduct a survey with school children prior to next holiday period to see what they want.</p>	<p>We identified with one family that the child was an unregistered young carer, mum provided with information & notified us she had an appointment with young carers.</p> <p>One child arrived early each day for lunch & appeared hungry, we allowed him to collect 1 bag before he went for a swim and 1 bag after to ensure he was eating enough.</p> <p>Due to discarding of rubbish on street we had to speak to a couple of youngsters about littering. Some days after that they would chap the door & hand litter in or they would use bin beside bus stop which is where they eat their lunches.</p>	<p>Great initiative although it is a concern that only primary school children were involved. Nursery children receive snacks etc. high school children are also entitled to free lunches. What consideration was given the their nutritional needs, can this be extended?</p> <p>We think it was a valuable resource for children & parents.</p>

Organisation	How could the registration and voucher process be improved?	How could either the deliveries or quality of food be improved?	Did you identify other benefits from the scheme? i.e. make contact with new families, identify further support requirements for families etc.	Do you have any overall comments, feedback or suggestions on the scheme?
			<p>We used this time to inform children & parents of free swimming, play in park sessions & fun days locally where they could take their children over the holiday period without too much cost.</p> <p>Extra lunches were distributed to families on low income or to siblings of free school meals.</p>	

Parents Comments.

Please state the location of your lunch bag collection point.	How could we make the registration process easier?	How could we make it easier to get your vouchers?	How could we make improvements to the food provided?	How could we improve the locations of the food collection points?	Do you have any other comments that you would like to make about the Summer Holiday Lunch Scheme?
Clackmannan CAP	Couldn't be simpler, kids came home from school with form and I filled it out and sent it back.	Very easy they were posted to me.	A healthy lunch was provided and the kids enjoyed it.	No improvement needed only a short walk away.	Be great if you could also buy them as only my school kids got them. I had to buy my toddlers lunch and they were a bit upset they didn't get one , but over all it was a great idea.
Alva			I felt lunches did not appeal to children much, adult size sandwich with adult type filling (cheese & coleslaw for example). I would give my kids half size with just cheese or ham. Sometimes got cheese sandwich & crackers in same lunch. Kids preferred fruit juice box to water. Look at how ASDA do their kids lunch box for example - small portion of fruit eg grapes, yoghurt small sandwich.	Why not use a provider where it can be collected fresh at any time of the day?	Time 12 -12.30 to collect was not convenient. If weather was good I took my kids out for the day somewhere and couldn't get back to collect lunches. Sandwiches appear to be made in Glasgow - couldn't local businesses have been used?

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Tullibody Healthy Living			There were quite a few days where the options weren't exactly child friendly, for example cream cheese and chives, or two different types of sandwich in one pack. My child is not fussy but there were days where the options were not very appealing.		<p>Only thing which would have made the service better (in my opinion). Would have been the ability to collect sandwiches first thing in the day.</p> <p>If going day trips etc. you can't collect the lunch packs.</p> <p>I realise that whoever is making them up needs time to prepare them, but they are going to waste anyway, if not able to collect.</p>
Tullibody Healthy Living	Better off registering at THL	Same as they are	Healthier - yogurt was low fat but high in sugar. Simpler choices - plain ham, cheese tuna, the mixed sandwiches not good for a lot of kid.	Satisfied where it is for me	Make it available for any age school kids not just primary.
	No problems				Thought it was a great idea kids loved it
					Was a good Idea as I did not have to worry.
Hawkhill			No mayo or cream cheese	Fine	Good youth club.

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			Not to use mayo because most children don't like it		Nice lady at centre very welcoming.
			Not enough meat.		Nice juice
			No fancy stuff for filling		Good
			Not enough choice.		Very nice centre
Tullibody Healthy Living	Initial registration ok	Problem arose when token did not arrive. Customer did not receive tokens until Thursday.		I can't fault the location of collection points.	Juice was not a daily option and only provided 2 or 3 times a week. The baking was below par scones were tiny and shortbread soggy and inedible. the fruit was quite small and tasteless so I think these need looking at.
Sauchie Hall			Most children prefer plain sandwiches eg. cheese or ham		I don't think it is worth while to have one with being the holidays you want to get out with the kids rather than come down for a lunch bag that my kids didn't enjoy so I believe it a wasn't worth the money. Would be better giving parents vouchers to spend on food at local supermarkets.

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Homestart,	Didn't know about it because my kids were off sick when letters came out.	Once knew about it I got them from Homestart.	Pieces were same day in day out, my son got bored of it but my daughter was fine.		Only found out about scheme through Homestart whom I have contact with.

