



---

**REPORT TO: THE MORAY COUNCIL ON 4 NOVEMBER 2009**

**SUBJECT: ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF SCHOOL MEAL PROVISION AT CABRACH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Council to approve an alternative method of school meal provision at Cabrach Primary School.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Council in terms of paragraph A42 of the Administrative Scheme in relation to making the most effective contribution to achieving the Council's objectives and Section D (1) relating to exercising its obligations as an Education Authority.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **The Council agree to cease the operation of the kitchen and the employment of a Cook at Cabrach Primary School for the provision of school meals and, in future, all meals will be provided from Mortlach Primary School, Dufftown with delivery by taxi or hire car.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 At the meeting of Full Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009 (Para 12 refers), the Council agreed to consultation being undertaken on an alternative option of providing school meals to Cabrach Primary School direct from Mortlach Primary School in Dufftown.
- 3.2 Cabrach Primary School has a current school roll of 4 with the average pupil meal uptake in 2008/2009 being 3 per day.
- 3.3 The School has a fully equipped kitchen where school meals are prepared and served, on a daily basis, by a permanently employed Cook. The 2008/09 the average cost per meal was £12.70.
- 3.4 A consultation meeting was held at the School on 3 June 2009 which was attended by three parents.
- 3.5 Those present at the meeting raised a number of concerns which were subsequently received in writing (**Appendix I**).

A summary of the concerns raised are listed below:

#### Health and Safety

Concern – Children from the age of 4 to 8 cannot serve themselves, the Children's Supervisor has to give her full attention to playground duties and cannot do two jobs.

Response – All other children from the age of 4 to 8 in Moray collect their own meals from a service point and there have been no reports of health and safety issues. The ratio of staff to pupils is significantly smaller in the Cabrach than other schools in Moray, as there are only 4 pupils in the school it is likely that they will finish their meal at the same time so will therefore not be left unattended. The existing Children's Supervisor at the School would undertake the duties associated with the receipt and serving of the meals.

#### Weather

Concern – Concerns regarding transport, problems with delivery during periods of bad weather.

Response – It is accepted that accessing rural schools during periods of snow could be a problem but Officers are of the view that, during periods of severe weather, schools would be closed and would therefore not require a school meal service. There have never been such problems with any of the other serveries in operation.

#### Social and Nutritional Aspects

Concern – Some parents expressed concern that conversion to the proposed change to service would have a detrimental impact upon their children's education. Specifically they felt that pupils would miss an opportunity to experience a meal being prepared from raw ingredients.

Response – It should be noted that no catering staff member is employed to assist with teaching and whilst some do, this is a personal decision and cannot be regarded as the norm. The important part that parents play in the education of their children should also not be overlooked.

#### Cost

Concern – Cannot see that the costs saving would be significant.

Response – Savings generated will be in the region of £7324.

- 3.6 As part of the consultation process, representatives from The Parent Council were invited to sample a meal, prepared and delivered from Mortlach Primary School. Comment received on behalf of the two parents who participated stated that the meal was found to be satisfactory in all respects.

- 3.7 It is proposed that all meals be prepared at Mortlach Primary School, put into insulated containers, transported to Cabrach Primary School by taxi and served to the pupils by the school's Children's Supervisor.

#### 4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

##### (a) **Single Outcome Agreement/Service Improvement Plan**

Implementing the changes recommended in this report will provide efficiencies within the Catering Service whilst continuing to contribute to Single Outcome Agreement Healthier agenda.

Increasing the number of children taking nutritious school meals is a Catering Service Improvement Plan target.

##### (b) **Policy and Legal**

Implementation of the proposals will enable the Council to demonstrate application of the Best Value principles required under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

##### (c) **Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

The revenue savings would be achieved in adopting the recommendations would be £7324 per annum based on 2008/2009 final figures.

The one-off redundancy payment to the staff member affected would be £4951.

All costs contained in this report have been updated from the previous report and are based on final verified figures from 2008/2009 Financial Management System.

The minor risk associated with the recommendations is that weather conditions, particularly snow, could result in it not being possible to transport meals to the school. However, from the information available, this would be unlikely, as such conditions would normally result in school closures.

There has been full consultation with staff and Trade Unions on the proposals contained in this report. The Children's Supervisor has expressed her concerns at undertaking additional duties but she will be provided with support and training should these proposals be approved.

##### (d) **Consultations**

Lorraine Paisey, Principal Accountant, was consulted and is in agreement with the financial implications contained in the report.

Nick Goodchild, Educational Resources Officer was consulted and his comments are contained within the Report.

Fiona Greene, Personnel Adviser, was consulted and is in agreement with the proposals contained within the report.

Grant Cruickshank, Principal Personnel Adviser is in agreement with the proposals contained within the report.

## 5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 **The costs associated with continuing to operate a kitchen and employment of a cook at Cabrach Primary School for so few school meals is not sustainable and the Recommendation contained in this Report would represent Best Value for the Council whilst continuing to provide a School Meal Services.**

Author of Report: I D Bruce, Environmental Protection Manager  
Background Papers: None  
Ref: IDB/MAS/638900

Signature: 

Dated: October 2009

Designation: Director of Environmental Services

Name: R A Stewart