

## REPORT

To: Education Resources Sub-Committee	Subject:  SCHOOL MEALS - CASHLESS PAYMENT SYSTEM
From: Director of Education and Director of Community Services	
Date: April 2000	
Ref: MM/KF	

**Summary**

This report details the introduction of a cashless payment system into the school meals sector which has been sought for some considerable time, but only recently has a source of funding been identified to enable the implementation of a pilot scheme.

**Recommendations**

The education resources sub-committee is recommended to :

- 1 note that the director of administration accepted the tender submitted by CRB Ltd.
- 2 refer this report to the social inclusion committee.
- 3 request the submission of regular reports to future meetings of the sub-committee

*Christine Pollock*

Members wishing further information should contact:

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NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL : DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

School Meals – Cashless Payment System

**Joint Report by the Director of Education and Director of Community Services**

**1 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Following discussions between education, community services and the chief executive's department funding was obtained through the Social Inclusion Partnership. The pilot scheme will be introduced into two secondary and two primary schools - Columba High, Rosehall High, Old Monkland and St Monica's Primaries.
- 1.2 The system operates via "Swipe Cards" loaded with a monetary value. Value is added by swiping cards through a revaluation unit and feeding money into it. Free meal children have their cards credited with the free meal value daily (any unused balance is debited daily). Cards can also have value added through cheques credited to the card at the computer point.
- 1.3 The benefits of the system include:-
- the encouragement of healthy eating via the allocation of rewards points for specific items.
  - supports social inclusion by making all children equal i.e. removal of free meal ticket stigma.
  - improves speed of service.
  - system can be programmed to stop children buying particular foods (e.g. by parental request, limiting confectionery purchases, special diet restrictions etc.)
  - parents can pay by cheque thereby ensuring that money given to children is used for the purchase of school meals.
  - full range of activity reports and usage analysis (including individual child reports if parent requests).

Under the Councils financial regulations tenders for works above £20,000 require to be approved by Committee. Due to the urgent nature of awarding these works prior to the end of the financial year, the advice of the director of administration was sought.

Tenders in excess of the exemption level of £20,000 may be accepted by the director of administration as authorised by the appropriate committee. Between committee cycles, where there is no appropriate sub committee available, then the director of administration, after consultation with the appropriate convenor, or in the absence of the convenor the vice convenor, may accept tenders in order to expedite the contractual process. In all cases where this occurs, then the contract shall be reported to the next meeting of the committee for information. After consultation with the convenor and at the request of the director of community services, the director of administration accepted the tender submitted by CRB Ltd for the installation of a school meals cashless payment system.

## 2 TENDER PROCESS

The necessary permissions and criteria have been established and the contract duly awarded to CRB Ltd for the sum of £50,000 in the financial year 1999/2000 with a commitment in principal to fund the balance of £15,000 in 2000/01 by both the SIP and the department of education.

Appendix 1 attached shows the tenders received and breakdown of offers. Following post tender presentations from both considered companies, CRB Ltd were selected to provide the system on the basis that they have a very definite and proven track record in the Scottish State School Sector, whereas Absec are in the early stages of implementation within the private sector.

## 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The education resources sub-committee is recommended to:

- 1 note that the Director of Administration, accepted the tender submitted by CRB Ltd.
- 2 refer this report to the social inclusion committee.
- 3 request the submission of regular reports to future meetings of the sub-committee

2 April 2000

## APPENDIX 1

Tender for the Provision of a School Meals Cashless Payment System				
Specification	Cash Registers Buccleugh	Absec Limited	Strathclyde Cash Registers	Counter Solutions
To provide a cashless payment system for school meals for North Lanarkshire Council			Company indicated that they would be too small themselves to cope with the size of contract	Declined to Tender despite initial interest
Tender Price	£62,196.00		£49,817.00	
Tender Evaluation Amendments:			Permission granted to pass to ACR Retail Systems, Glasgow	
Non-Photo Card Price Adjustments	(1150)		Insufficient data supplied	
Wiring (est.)	£4,000.00			
4 Modems			£240.00	
4 P.C.s			£2,900.00	
4 Printers			£1,000.00	
3 Rev. Units			£7,410.00	
3 EPOS Terminals			£2,850.00	
Additional Cards			£600.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£65,046</b>		<b>£64,817</b>	