

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT

To: LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: WEB BITE LAUNCH	
From: HEAD OF PARKS AND CATERING SERVICES			
Date: 23/3/99	Ref: PJ/SF/SR		

1 **Introduction**

- 1.1 The Web Bite concept was borne out of a joint venture between North and South Lanarkshire Councils as a good example of Best Value practice in operation.

2 **Background**

- 2.1 North Lanarkshire Council inherited a school meals service at the time of reorganisation that was synonymous with other local authorities school meals services and which generally did not attract the majority of school pupils. Whilst availability of funding to make significant improvements would always be difficult, it was decided to undertake market research to establish pupils views on current services in order that when funding became available, the right decisions may be taken.
- 2.2 There was further a significant threat to school meals service with consideration being given to reductions in the budgets available for the provision of this service. Whilst large reductions were implemented a credible service was retained however, it was apparent something further would have to be done in order to protect the service in years to come.
- 2.3 This has led to a number of exciting possibilities being introduced. It was also realised that unless due care and attention was paid to diet and nutrition, then the Council could be criticised for lack of responsibility. Hence the introduction of the Diet and Nutrition policy which is the subject of a further report to this Committee.
- 2.4 Research comments have included "outdated menus, outdated style of service, lack of investment, lack of street cred, queuing times, food choice and quality" amongst others. A fore runner to the Web Bite was the Food Court concept introduced in 3 pilot schools. Whilst Food Courts achieved the initial targets which have largely been sustained, it was apparent that even that approach was not radical enough and hence further discussions which have led eventually to the Web Bite. The objectives of the new concept included for even faster service, menu review, exciting new look, increased productivity, increased purchasing power, recognition of healthy eating and subsequent financial benefits to the service and the Council as a whole.
- 2.5 The style of the Web Bite is reminiscent of the high street burger chains, however, overall presentation and menu items are designed as appropriate to the school environment.

3 Current Position

- 3.1 The concept was defined in late 1998, investment was secured with the private sector and the respective Council Departments. Private Sectors companies involved currently are:-

A G Barr
Bernard Mathews
McCains
Mueller
Robert Wiseman & Sons

The most significant involvement is from A.G. Barr who have also confirmed that their level of funding is secure for 50% of the secondary schools within the 2 Councils over a 3 year period.

- 3.2 The first 2 Web Bites were launched in St Maurices High School, Cumbernauld and Trinity High School, Rutherglen. St Maurices opened for business on 10th march 1999 and had its official launch on the 16th march 1999, opened by Nick Nairn along with Council Officials and Elected Members. The early signs are extremely encouraging with uptake having increased by well over 60%.

4 Summary

- 4.1 Presentation of this concept has already earned the respect of the school children it serves. This is seen by the controlled approach to the new queuing arrangements and the way in which they clear their tables and deposit litter in the bins provided.
- 4.2 Continued and detailed analysis will be made of the performance and in the short term the potential for growth across North Lanarkshire schools.

5 Recommendations

The Leisure Services Committee is recommended to:-

- 5.1 Endorse the details of the report as presented
- 5.2 Recommend implementation quickly in other schools, subject to final analysis and agreement with the Department of Education.
- 5.3 That the report be referred to Education Committee for information.

