

AGENDA ITEM No.....⁹.....

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
REPORT

To: Leisure Services Committee		Subject: Diet & Nutrition Policy
From: Head of Parks and Catering		
Date: 15 March 1999	Ref:	

1. **Introduction**

At the Leisure Services Committee of the the 29th April 1998, it was noted that the draft Diet & Nutrition Policy had been approved. Further comments have now been incorporated into the revised Policy and this report seeks to bring members up to date and requests Committee to approve the Policy, in order that it may contribute to building a framework for the strategic development of North Lanarkshire's catering service.

2. **Background**

- 2.1 The previous report highlighted the poor health record of the nation and the subsequent reduction in quality of life for numerous individuals.
- 2.2 The Diet & Nutrition Policy has adopted many of the recommendations in the report "Eating for Health - A Diet Action Plan for Scotland" published by the Scottish Office Department of Health, July 1996.
Further, local authorities responsibilities have been highlighted in a consultation document "Working together for a healthier Scotland", February 1998.
- 2.3 This report seeks to justify the context of the Diet & Nutrition Policy in relation to the documents noted above and to ensure that Catering Services plays a positive role in the council's contribution alongside the roles of sport and recreation, sport and recreation development and all other Departmental contributors to the council's Social Strategy.
- 2.4 In terms of the requirements of the Best Value regime, the draft catering services specification requires adherence to the Diet & Nutrition Policy in terms of the strategic developments & implementation of the service.

3. **Current Position**

- 3.1 Following the previous report, comments were received from the Departments of Education and Social Work and also the Lanarkshire Health Board. Where appropriate, these comments have now been incorporated into the Policy and some additional material covered through the revised Food Safety System.
- 3.2 As previously stated the policy recognises that diets can not be changed by decree or prescription as it would be unacceptable and impracticable. Food should be enjoyable and overall be based on individual choice. Thus it is also important that the strategies stress the importance of clear information for consumers, so that they make informed choices about what they eat. Equally, change will not be accomplished overnight - eating habits have developed over many years and it will take

time to bring about the desired shift in attitudes and behaviour. Thus the Policy will be a blueprint for action over the coming years, however, small changes now can make a real difference and begin a process which will result in better health all round.

- 3.3 Implementation priorities will include the nutritional analysis and subsequent presentation of all primary school menu choices, a review of tuck shop and vending services in schools and a review of mainstream catering services into social work establishments where improvements in choice, especially for those requiring special diets, will be a primary objective.
- 3.4 An integral part of the delivery of the strategies required to maintain the policy principles is to continue developing the delivery of catering services that will improve both quality of product and retention of interest in our services. Developments such as the introduction of Cashless Payment Systems into schools to encourage particularly increased uptake from free meal recipients; the gradual phasing out of dining centres to be replaced by onsite regeneration facilities which will increase choice, quality and ultimately number of users; creations of concepts like "Web Bite" in secondary schools that whilst providing healthy choices also provide items that children want. These initiatives will revitalise an essential service provided attention is also given to the fabric of dining room environments.
- 3.5 The Diet & Nutrition Policy provides parameters for the control of catering services. In a Best Value context these parameters, along with providing a quality service, services that people want and an environment that is conducive to good eating will contribute significantly towards the encouragement of healthier lifestyles.

4. **Summary**

- 4.1 The Diet & Nutrition Policy is an integral part of the Department's contribution to the council's social strategy and is accordingly adopted through the Leisure Plan.
- 4.2 The provision of other lifestyle improvement services such as community fitness, improved access to sports and leisure facilities etc. will continue to be provided by the appropriate section - all such initiatives being complementary to one another.
- 4.3 Any strategy for health improvement must have at its heart the recognition that it is "the public's health" and the public's own responsibility. However we are in a position of influence and able to affect others. The Diet & Nutrition Policy adopts the principles that can achieve exactly that.
- 4.4 Good health is the basis for happy childhood, achievement in middle years and independence in old age. This Policy will engage ideas and start a process of commitment towards improving the quality of health of those people who rely on catering services provided by North Lanarkshire Council.

5. **Recommendations**

- 5.1 That Committee approve the adoption of the Diet & Nutrition Policy as a strategic tool in the development of catering services.
- 5.2 That Committee approve in principle the development of new catering initiatives that allow for choice and consumer attraction to be increased.

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