

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 16 October 2014.

Present:-

Trevor Jones (Chairman)
Mike Byatt (Vice-Chairman)
Deborah Croney, Lesley Dedman, Ian Gardner and Peter Wharf.

Toni Coombs (Cabinet Member for Education and Communications) and Robert Gould (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources) under Standing Order 54(1).

Officers:

Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Sara Tough (Director for Children's Services), Jonathan Mair (Acting Director for Corporate Resources), Karen Andrews (Head of Dorset Procurement), Sam Fox-Adams (Head of Policy, Partnerships and Communications), Patrick Myers (Senior Manager, Strategy, Partnerships and Performance), Mark Taylor (Head of Internal Audit, Insurance and Risk Management) and Helen Whitby (Principal Democratic Services Officer).

Guest Speakers

John Bagwell (Headteacher, Parley First School), Michael Brooke (Member Champion – Children and Young People, Borough of Poole), Carol Evans (Vice-Chairman, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Borough of Poole), Robin Mills (Managing Director, Chartwells), Declan O'Toole (Director, Forerunner Personal Catering Ltd), Caroline Morgan (Chief Executive, Local Food Links Ltd) and Andy Pye (Weymouth College).

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on **25 November 2014**.)

Apologies for Absence

170. Apologies for absence were received from Andrew Cattaway and David Harris.

Code of Conduct

171. There were no declarations by members of any discloseable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

Universal Free Schools Meals Contract

172.1 The Committee considered a call to account in relation to the failure of the Universal Free School Meals contract with Chartwells. In accordance with the Call to Account procedure contained in the Constitution (Overview and Scrutiny Rule 14(b)), the Committee requested that the Director for Children's Services and the Cabinet Members for Corporate Resources and Education and Communications be called to account. Headteachers, members from Bournemouth Borough Council and the Borough of Poole and other service providers had been invited to contribute information to help members with their enquiries. A full report of the call to account is attached as an annexure to these minutes. Members were provided with the results of a Free School Meals Survey held from 18 September to 8 October 2014, information about service failure incidents, a summary of the approach taken by the Borough of Poole and the Universal Infant Free School Meals minute of Bournemouth Borough Council's Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 25 September 2014.

172.2 The Chairman introduced the item by explaining the Committee's membership, how it operated, and highlighted that it had no decision making powers but could make recommendations to the County Council's Cabinet. The Committee only had the power to call the relevant Director and Cabinet Member to account but only used this measure when something important had gone wrong and in order to identify lessons to be learned. He then highlighted the Committee's key lines of enquiry as set out in the report as they would provide the focus of the meeting.

172.3 The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which addressed the Committee's key lines of enquiry. The Chief Executive presented her report in detail. She explained that the previous school meals' contract had ended in July 2014 with the new contract for free school meal delivery across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole being developed over the period of a year. It had addressed both the Government's requirements and issues with the previous contract.

Letting of the Contract

172.4 The Chief Executive explained that schools and academies had been consulted in May and October 2013 (following the Government's announcement of Universal Free School Meals) to establish their commitment to any new arrangements as viability of the contract was dependent upon this. Market engagement, which included small companies operating in Dorset, confirmed that a single contract would offer the best opportunity to identify a provider. The tender process was set out in her report. She also referred to Government funding of £883,000 which had been allocated to purchase equipment needed by schools to ensure that meals could be delivered and received across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.

172.5 Small local companies had not been in a position to tender for the contract as they were unable to deliver meals on the scale required. Chartwells' bid had been successful. This included the creation of a new production unit in Dorset, meals being provided to the Soil Association Food for Life Standards moving from Bronze to Silver standard by 2016, reduced meal costs for schools and parents, and reduced administration for schools.

172.6 The Chief Executive confirmed that the process had been risk assessed and that market engagement and an assessment of costs and quality had been undertaken. Lessons learned from previous service failures were used to ensure delivery would be achieved on time. A "one council" approach had been adopted, financial risks identified and steps taken to mitigate these. A Project Manager had also been appointed to oversee the project and regular meetings were held with Chartwells prior to the contract start date. Chartwells provided details of their visits to schools and practical issues prior to the start of the Summer Term in 2014.

172.7 At the end of June 2014 the County Council were notified of a fire at Chartwells' Central Production Unit (CPU) at Ferndown and that it would not be able to operate in the way envisaged. Bovington Park was identified as a short term solution and Chartwells paid for the necessary additional work to upgrade the facilities there. At that time there was nothing to indicate that the contract would not be delivered.

Delivery of the Contract

172.8 The problems arose on 2 September 2014 when schools reported late delivery of meals, receiving part orders and difficulties contacting Chartwells. A meeting was held with Chartwells later that day when the nature of the problems became apparent and reasons for them were explained. Chartwells provided assurance that the problems would be resolved by 3 September 2014. The problems then intensified on 3 September with two schools not receiving meals, deliveries being late and only part orders supplied to some schools. A recovery plan was sought from Chartwells and actions identified to ensure delivery of meals

was rectified and completed as soon as possible. As a result 23 schools served from Poole (including 8 from Dorset) received packed lunches up to half term and a range of different services were put in place for other schools. As the County Council had overall responsibility for the contract, they set up a help desk as a point of contact for schools.

Communication with Schools

172.9 Chartwells had contacted schools about the Ferndown fire on 4 July 2014 and gave assurance that the contract would be delivered. This was followed up by emails and a range of other communications. The Contract Manager visited schools and gave every assurance that the contract would be delivered. However, at the beginning of September the service failed and communication proved difficult. On 4 September 2014 Chartwells provided a dedicated team to contact schools each morning and afternoon to check that food had arrived and that there were no issues. Chartwells also introduced a weekly newsletter to schools and kept a clear log of issues.

Lessons Learned

172.10 The Chief Executive explained that the report provided initial lessons learned for the Committee to consider and she briefly outlined these. Chartwells were expected to agree financial compensation in the region of £450k for schools and parents affected by the service failure and she hoped that this matter would be concluded soon so that the funding could be accessed. However, she made it clear that the Committee had no part in the allocation of the compensation.

172.11 She highlighted that Chartwells had not tested the Bovington Park facilities, their assumptions about staff continuity had been wrong, recruitment efforts had now been doubled to ensure sufficient staff were available after half term, communication plans for the County Council and Chartwells had not been as robust as the contract warranted and that this would now be an integral part of any procurement process. The business continuity arrangements in place had not been specific enough and not in sufficient detail and Bovington Park had not been an ideal interim solution. She added that risk had been considered based on the County Council's financial risk register and that the problems had escalated beyond the risks considered.

Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources

172.12 The Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources explained that his role had been to ensure that the procedure had been carried out in line with the County Council's tender arrangements. The important thing was that children had not received the meals they were expecting and this was regrettable. There had been quick responses to the problems experienced. The matter was being addressed as part of a "one council" approach and everyone was working together to resolve the issues. Six weeks later the financial settlement was about to be agreed and previous lessons learned had borne fruit. There were a number of key lines of enquiry to be addressed and initial lessons learned were identified within the report. He looked forward to hearing the debate and the identification of other lessons to be learned so that any repetition could be avoided.

Cabinet Member for Education and Communications

172.13 The Cabinet Member for Education and Communications stated that her focus had been on the provision to schools and the benefit to children. She had responsibility for the provision of school meals to individual schools which were difficult to provide in an authority with large rural areas. The County Council ran a central catering contract which schools bought into or not and was responsible for ensuring that every child eligible for free school meals received them as opposed to the Universal Free School Meals scheme which the Government had introduced. The previous contract ended in July 2014 and concerns had been raised about the quality of the food provided then, the distance the food was transported and the immaturity of the local market to cope with additional demand. The previous contract

ended when Universal Free School Meals were being introduced so the contract had been re-procured.

172.14 In readiness for the new scheme, the Government had provided £883,000 for school kitchens to be upgraded and this had to be completed within a short timescale. This work had been completed on time and within budget.

172.15 With regard to the contract, it was decided that anything other than a pan-Dorset contract would not be financially viable. She explained that if the cost of school meals increased, this would impact on a school's general budget. Only one tender had been received, that being from Chartwells, and up until the start of the term, there had been nothing to indicate that the contract would not be successfully delivered. She had not been aware of any problems until schools contacted the County Council and she visited schools to see the issues. She agreed that the provision at Bovington Park had been inadequate but she complimented the Contract Manager for the actions taken to address the problems and for arranging the regular meetings held between the local authorities and Chartwells. These had provided a robust challenge to Chartwells about the quality, timeliness and delivery of the school meals. The real test would be when the new CPU opened in Poole after half term. These arrangements would be tested the following week to ensure that there would be no recurrence of the problems experienced. There was an improving picture, although some schools were reporting issues of meal quality but these were being addressed. Chartwells had accepted that delivery had fallen short of that expected and had agreed to compensate all schools and parents affected. She added that in future any risk assessment should take into account the fact the County Council was contracting on behalf of other bodies and that any procurement issues should be fronted by the relevant Cabinet Member. Chartwells had recognised the high turnover of staff in the summer, the importance of a planned communications strategy and robust communications for all involved. Chartwells had accepted liability and brought in extra resources and it was hoped that the new CPU would provide the service that was expected. She had every confidence that the situation would turn into a success.

172.16 The Chairman explained that no representatives from Bournemouth Borough Council were able to attend but that the matter had been considered by their Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 25 September 2014 and members had been provided with copies of the relevant minute. The Borough of Poole had also provided information on their approach to the difficulties. The Vice-Chairman of their Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee confirmed that Poole had experienced similar problems to those in Dorset.

Robin Mills, Managing Director, Chartwells

172.17 Chartwells' Managing Director stated that the Company took the service in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole seriously and were well aware of the difficulties caused and the impact on schools at the start of term. He apologised to members, schools, parents and governors for the problems experienced.

172.18 He then explained that the Fire in Ferndown had invoked the first level of their contingency planning. The fire had been a set back and had led to the temporary arrangements at Bovington Park. This site had provided other issues and had led to the service failure. These included a number of trained and experienced staff leaving the Company, capacity issues and communication problems with schools. All of which had impacted on the Company's ability to deliver in the first week of term. Chartwells had responded quickly by making alternative arrangements to guarantee delivery but these had provided further complications and led to packed lunches being provided for some schools. The Managing Director then explained that Chartwells had moved additional experienced employees from sites elsewhere, volunteers were being used to provide the 11-12,000 meals

required per day, a help line had been provided for schools, schools were being contacted twice daily to ensure food was delivered and identify any concerns, a “buddy” system had been introduced on delivery vans, all issues were now logged and that meetings had been held with parents and governors. The reimbursement plan was nearly finalised so that schools and parents could access this. The operation was being transferred to Poole and the service would shortly be back to where it should have been, using local food, local suppliers and employing local people. The Poole Central Processing Unit (CPU) would start cooking meals the following Monday with two weeks of trials before starting to deliver meals on 3 November 2014.

172.19 With regard to lessons learned, the Managing Director stated that additional levels of contingency should be written in and back up suppliers identified so that extra capacity was available and in place should this be needed. Extra contingencies would remain in place until such time as they were no longer required. Chartwells had been transparent about the action they had taken and it was now about ensuring that the Poole CPU was fully resourced and contingencies in place for delivery on 3 November 2014.

John Bagwell, Headteacher, Parley First School

172.21 Mr Bagwell explained his experience of the school meals delivered. He reported that meals delivered in the first week were of poor quality and had been unacceptable. His school had 300 children. Of these, 180 were in Key Stage 1 and eligible for free school meals and a number of Key Stage 2 children paid for them. During the first few weeks meals had not been provided and he had to provide alternatives. This had knocked parents' confidence in the service and he had kept parents updated on a daily basis. Communication with Chartwells had initially been poor. The School had now had packed lunches for six weeks, which was unacceptable and hot school meals were to be provided from 3 November 2014. However, take up currently was only 26% as opposed to the expected 87% and this would have an impact on the October 2014 census. He felt that the local authorities and Chartwells had not met the needs of the children. He reported concerns about on-line ordering and hoped that school administration time would be reduced. He hoped that the move to Poole would be positive and that everything would be in place for 3 November 2014.

Andrew Pye, Weymouth College

172.22 Mr Pye explained that the College provided 6,500 meals per week to six local schools, with children having a choice of different menus. This service worked well and feedback had been positive.

Declan O'Toole, Director, Forerunner Personal Catering Ltd

172.23 Mr O'Toole's Company was based in Bournemouth and provided 2,000 meals per day to 13 schools in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. His Company had not experienced any problems with delivering meals. He thought the fundamental mistake had been with the contract being awarded to one provider. This had not spread any of the risk should anything go wrong as would have been the case if the contract had been awarded to several providers, who may have been able to increase their capacity if necessary. In fact he felt that local suppliers had been excluded.

172.24 He questioned the fairness of the interview process to select the provider as he had been interviewed by four people for only 30 minutes whereas he believed the eventual contractor to have been interviewed by the same panel for four hours. The panel knew little detail of the contract and the business involved and he felt that a decision as to the eventual contractor had already been made. He also drew attention to the fact that the previous contract had been provided by “Cygnet” and that “Chartwells” was a new name for the same company.

172.25 Mr O'Toole then referred to the report and commented on several areas. He felt that the nature of the contract had excluded local, smaller providers and he referred to European Directives and Government initiatives which now encouraged smaller contractors. He felt that the contract had not been let properly and assumptions made about smaller contractors not being able to deliver to the more rural areas. He had withdrawn from the tendering process because his Company had not been able to deliver 12,000 meals per day. He thought it impractical that for a company to set up a kitchen to produce 12,000 meals in three and a half months and having only one kitchen to produce meals across the area. He knew of instances of meals being delivered late, raw, vegetarian children being provided with pork sausage, one school not receiving any meals and occasions when schools had provided fish and chips, pizza or gone to local supermarkets to buy sandwiches. With regard to there being a high turnover of staff within the industry, Mr O'Toole disagreed with this as his Company had a low staff turnover. It was his view that it was unprofessional for a company of the size of Chartwells not to know their business. He also stated that information in the report about his Company was inaccurate.

172.26 It was stated that similar problems had been experienced by schools in Poole who were provided with meals under the County Council's contract. There had been no problems with meal provision in Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole by other suppliers.

172.27 In summary Mr O'Toole felt he had been excluded from the contract process and that the decision to select one large company had been made from the outset when it could have been broken down into smaller contracts. European Directives and Government initiatives seemed to have been ignored even though this issue had been raised. The only children not getting meals were those supplied by Chartwells. His Company were now inundated by requests for meals from other schools but he did not have the capacity to provide additional meals currently.

127.28 Mr O'Toole said he worked hard to ensure the success of his Company and his clients were happy with the service they received. If the County Council had broken up the contract this would have kept costs down, provided work for local businesses and they would not have been exposed to the problems.

Caroline Morgan, Chief Executive, Local Food Links Ltd

127.29 Mrs Morgan clarified that her Company supplied meals to 31 schools in West and North Dorset. They were the largest independent provider in Dorset and had not been included in any of the discussions. She felt that her Company had an excellent record, providing good quality meals with kitchens based in four towns. With regard to schools in rural areas being at risk of no provision, she explained that her Company provided meals for 14 schools of less than 150 pupils and 8 of between 150-200 pupils.

127.30 She stated that the report was inaccurate in that it did not show the full extent of her Company's coverage. She had more than doubled capacity and had increased the number of meals provided from 1,250 to 3,000 without any delivery or staffing issues. She stated that a high staff turnover was not the industry norm and that her Company had no experience of this. With regard to the claim that schools in mid and North Dorset would not have access to any provision if not part of a large contract, Mrs Morgan explained that her Company provided meals to fifteen schools in North Dorset and that her Company could provide more.

127.31 She thought the letting of one large contract was a mistake and that smaller contracts would have supported local businesses and provided employment for local people. It would also have improved quality, minimised delivery distances and reduced potential problems and provided the County Council with an opportunity to build relationships with local

providers, some of whom were nationally recognised. It would also have kept money in the local economy.

127.32 The County Council had indicated that one main provider would mean that the contract was easily deliverable. They had consulted schools and headteachers about the best options going forward but schools had been told that if they left the central contract they would lose support and the procurement team would act in the schools' best interests. There was a need to build a relationship between the County Council and smaller suppliers and work in partnership with schools. Mrs Morgan had termly meetings and visited the schools she supplied and was willing to share best practice. Her Company used fresh food every day with local sources wherever possible and she strived to improve the service every day.

The Borough of Poole's Member Champion - Children and Young People, and Governor of a First School

127.33 Mr Brooke, stated that schools had received meals on the first and second day of term but these had been significantly late. After that packed lunches had been provided. He reported instances of humous sandwiches being provided to very young children, bread being stale and one school being supplied with chocolate when this was against the school's policies. He had visited another school where school meals were not provided by Chartwells and where they were well cooked and sufficient. Chartwells supplied eleven schools in Poole. He echoed comments by other school meal providers in that schools and children benefitted from the services they provided but not those provided by Chartwells.

Consideration by the Committee:

127.34 Members then sought clarification on a number of points. They noted that the contract had been awarded after market engagement and that a number of suppliers had been part of this process, that the County Council had sought quality meals to be provided across the county for both urban and rural areas and that the contract involved provision of meals for 110 schools across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole.

127.35 With regard to why the County Council had not considered tendering both a single contract and multiple contracts, it was explained that the procurement process was complicated and would have affected framework arrangements. The Acting Director for Corporate Resources explained that the Government had two years in which to introduce regulations to bring the Directions into force. The new Directives were introduced in April 2014 but were not in place at the time the Universal Free School Meals contract was tendered. However, any future contracts would take these into account and should provide better opportunities for smaller enterprises.

127.36 One member suggested that any recommendations should include something about the quality and standard of food provided and that this should be investigated by the County Council as soon as possible. Recommendations should also refer to the management of risk as there had been previous examples of risks not being identified and leading to service failure. In this case financial risk was addressed but not that of service failure. Also reference should be made to the awarding of the contract and the need for small and medium enterprises to be used in future in order to develop the local economy in Dorset.

127.37 With regard to future contracts, it was suggested that if one provider was being sought, then any risks should be evaluated clearly and steps taken to mitigate them. The Chief Executive agreed that risk had not been addressed in the way it should have been and that although every effort had been made, the service had failed in that meals were not provided from the first day. There had been nothing to predict this outcome. The scoping of the contract had involved a range of enterprises and it had been concluded that one contractor should be sought. This would be considered in future.

127.30 Reference was made to similarities the current call to account had with that of the review of Home to School Transport held in 2012 where there had been problems with risk monitoring, evaluation and steps being taken to mitigate these. As to whether there had been a systematic failure within the County Council the Chief Executive stated that lessons learned following that review had led to actions being identified and implemented. A project manager had been appointed for the current contract and the project had been managed and, although these steps were in place this time, the failure was similar. More had gone wrong on the second day and things had worsened after that. She regretted that children had been let down again and stated that this would not be repeated. She reminded members that compensation arrangements were being discussed with Chartwells.

127.31 One member suggested that if the Chief Executive stated that the process had been carried out correctly, then perhaps the process needed to be reviewed. He then asked about the role and responsibility of Cabinet members. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources took responsibility for the contract and agreed that the support the County Council provided for local economic growth should be reviewed. There had been significant changes in the procurement processes and it was his responsibility to ensure that future procurement decisions followed the correct procedure. He paid tribute to the work of the Cabinet Member for Education and Communications to ensure better outcomes for children and that the Government's introduction of Universal Free School Meals had involved tight deadlines for implementation and that this had been successfully delivered. He hoped that the Committee would identify any areas for improvement.

127.32 With regard to whether at any point it had been identified that something needed to be done about the contract, the Cabinet Member for Education and Communications stated that she was not a procurement expert. Her role, along with other members, was to set the County Council's policies. Over the summer she had been concentrating on the delivery of the capital budget, ensuring that all schools were ready for the introduction of the new contract within a short timescale. This had been carried out on time and within budget. There had been significant difficulties with the previous school meal contract and food had not been locally sourced. Cygnet (Chartwells sister company) was experienced, and she had had every confidence that Chartwells would meet the contract. The failure was due to the fire which had been unforeseen and the problems would not have occurred if the fire had not taken place.

127.33 As to whether any action had been taken to change the level of risk when the fire occurred and whether additional monitoring had been introduced, the Cabinet Member for Education and Communications explained that she had been told of the Bovington Park arrangements and that everything would go smoothly. When it was highlighted that it was her responsibility to look at the wider picture to ensure that nothing went wrong, she said that her focus had been on ensuring that the capital programme work was completed on time and schools ready for the start of the new contract. There had been nothing to indicate that anything else would go wrong.

127.34 With regard to whether Chartwells had carried out any pilot delivery or test runs, the Managing Director explained that the contract included the use of local sources of food from local businesses and that the fire had had wider implications which led to the change of location. The tests for Bovington Park were insufficient and lessons had been learned so that arrangements for Poole were enhanced and trials were being undertaken the following week. The Bovington Park unit would not be stood down until Chartwells were satisfied that the new arrangements were working well. A member commented that, given the size and experience of Chartwells, he was surprised that their contingency plans were insufficient. In response the Managing Director explained that Chartwells had responded as quickly as they could to the issues on day one and lessons learned had led to 20% more drivers being available for the new arrangements, the system being piloted and Chartwells

having more staff on standby. With regard to the procurement process, it was stated that due process had been followed, that the contract difficulties had only arisen due to the fire and that, as more issues occurred, different levels of contingency were invoked. As to references of cold meals being served and inappropriate food provided, the Managing Director was unaware of this but was happy to investigate these on a case by case basis.

127.35 With regard to decision making and the roles of Cabinet members and senior officers and how Cabinet members were kept updated on issues, the Director for Children's Services explained that she had regular contact with her Cabinet member who ensured that a "one council" approach was being taken with regard to policy implementation of the Universal Free School Meals contract. The fire and risks had been raised with officers and shared with the Cabinet lead. Equally, the Director had been given assurances about the working arrangements and the provider's ability to deliver the contract. The problems only came to light in the first week. She supported the lessons learned and that the risk register should be used to raise issues.

127.36 In response to who decided that a pan-Dorset approach should be taken, the Chief Executive stated that under the County Council's procurement guidelines, this was not a Cabinet decision. The terms of the contract set out the requirement for the use of local food and suppliers and the employment of residents in order to benefit the local economy.

127.37 With regard to the compensation, the Managing Director explained that this was to reimburse schools and parents and that Chartwells aimed to make this process as simple and easy as possible.

127.38 As to the nature of the contract, the Head of Dorset Procurement explained that the contract included standard clauses and allowed for variation of terms or termination. The Acting Director for Corporate Resources clarified that the contract could be varied but only by agreement unless there was a failure to fulfil in which case the contract could be terminated. The contract could have been terminated at the point of the fire as this was significant and an alternative provided could have been found. But, given the assurances from the contractor that everything would be put right, the contract had continued.

127.39 One member drew attention to the reference to continuity and contingency arrangements within the contract and asked whether the County Council had reviewed these. She also asked whether schools had plans in place should no meals be delivered. The Managing Director agreed that these were written into the contract. After the fire, Chartwells invoked their first contingency plan and as the issues emerged other levels were invoked. This included food being brought in from elsewhere and packed lunches being provided, but these things took time to arrange.

127.40 With regard to why food provision had reverted to Nottingham rather than Hounslow, it was explained that Chartwells had a number of options available but chose Nottingham because it was the more established operation. Chartwells had learned a lot of lessons about operational recovery and communications and were keen to provide the service. They had applied the lessons learned to the Poole operation, and backup arrangements were in place. A two week trial was to be held and if Poole failed then Nottingham and Bovington Park were still available as a back up. He agreed that disaster recovery should have been in place.

127.41 The Chairman summarised that there was no denial that things had gone badly wrong for the reputation of the Company and the Councils and this had been compounded by the principles of safety for young children, which was a top priority for the County Council. They could and should have done better. Chartwells wanted to deliver school meals to Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole and there was no alternative provider covering the whole

County. The County Council and officers were expected to monitor the contract on a daily basis and the horror stories were unacceptable. Lessons learned had been identified and compensation had been accepted by the Authority and it was hoped that a repetition would be avoided. The Committee would take its time in identifying additional lessons learned but did not expect any recurrence of mouldy food or there would be prosecution as this would be unacceptable. Members would consider evidence provided and also wished to identify the experience of other local authorities introducing Universal Free School Meals. He thanked everyone for attending and hoped that those attending would have a chance to comment on the recommendations to Cabinet.

Resolved

128. That the Committee agree its recommendations outside of the meeting.

Meeting duration: 10.00am to 12:20pm