

Report on	Response to the Department of Education Consultation on Update to Nutritional Standards for School Food
Date of Meeting	10 th March 2020
Reporting Officer	Fiona McClements, Head of Environmental Health

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform Members about the Department of Education's Consultation on the Update to Nutritional Standards for School Food.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Nutritional Standards for School Lunches and Other Food and Drinks in Schools were developed in keeping with government guidance on healthy eating in 2007. In the 12 years since these standards were developed, evidence and research has emerged that indicates more fruit, vegetables and dietary fibre should be consumed, while the amount of sugar, salt, fat and processed meat consumed should be reduced.
2.2	The Department of Education is proposing to update the existing Nutritional Standards to ensure that all food provided in grant-aided schools is in keeping with up-to-date government guidance on healthy eating.
2.3	The consultation document at Appendix 1 refers to research that shows having a healthy diet can have a critical role in cognitive development. Providing a nutritious school meal can increase pupils' concentration levels during afternoon lessons which can help close the performance gap and reduce inequality. The benefits of a healthy diet are well known and can not only help maintain a healthy weight but can reduce the risk of tooth decay, chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease and some cancers. It can also help improve the mental wellbeing of children and young people by increasing self-esteem and improving mood.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	This consultation is intended to seek the views of the public on a proposed update to the nutritional standard of all food provided in grant-aided schools. Updating the Nutritional Standards will come at a cost, however, the benefits to children and young people from having good, nutritious school meals is well known.
3.2	The Health and Well-being subgroup of the Northern Ireland Food Managers Group, which sits under Environmental Health Northern Ireland (EHNI), has prepared a response to the Department of Education Consultation on Update to Nutritional Standards for School Food. This consultation response has been considered and

	amended to include comments from the Environmental Health department of Mid Ulster District Council. The draft response is at Appendix 2.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: N/a
	Human: N/a
	Risk Management: N/a
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/a
	Rural Needs Implications: N/a
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is recommended that Council considers and agrees the content of the attached draft consultation response, and responds to the Department of Education in accordance with the completed consultation template. The closing date of the consultation is 27 th March 2020.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Consultation document on the Update to Nutritional Standards for School Food.
6.2	Appendix 2 – Proposed Mid Ulster District Council response to the Department of Education Consultation on Update to Nutritional Standards for School Food.