

Agenda Item	7
Report No	RDB-03-26

The Highland Council

Committee: Redesign Board

Date: 19 March 2026

Report Title: Food in Schools Project - Progress report

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 Work is now progressing on the 10-point action plan as discussed at Redesign Board on 20 November 2025.

1.2 The content and structure of this report is intended to:

- assist Member scrutiny and performance management;
- inform decision making and aid continuous improvement; and
- provide transparency and accessibility

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. **Note** the progress to date.

3. Implications

3.1 **Resource:** There are no resource implications arising as a direct consequence of this report.

3.2 **Legal:** There are no legal implications arising as a direct consequence of this report.

3.3 **Risk:** There are no risks arising as a direct result of this report. Project/Programme risks are identified via the council risk management process and monitored through the Portfolio Boards and are reported by exception only.

3.4 **Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people):** There are no immediate health and safety implications arising from this report.

3.5 **Gaelic:** There are no implications arising as a direct result of this report.

4. Impacts

4.1 This is an update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required. As actions are progressed these will be assessed for impacts accordingly.

5. Food in Schools – Delivering Sustainability

5.1 The project has a RAG status of Green with activity on track.



5.2 Work is progressing in accordance with the timescales indicated in the Food in Schools Action Plan across five of the ten areas of action. These areas are:

- Undertake a menu review – the initial focus of this action is on secondary school menus
- Improve integration/collaboration between CCFM and Education services – initial meetings have taken place
- Develop a “Food in Schools” parental engagement strategy – draft strategy developed and discussions underway with Education to ensure this dovetails with Education Parental Engagement Strategy. Initial engagement with parents detailing where school meals information can be accessed on website via school newsletters in January, further updates bi-monthly.
- Review supplier contracts - principal areas of action focused on local venison procurement
- Establish a waste tracking process for school meals – Pilot project agreed and started.

The Action Plan is detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.

5.3 Financial Summary

Savings target is £875,000 over the period 2024 to 2027. To date savings total is £357,000 so progress is on track towards target.

6. Next Steps

Work will continue in the above five areas with additional activity due to begin during spring on the remaining Action Plan items in accordance with the project timelines stated in the Action Plan. Future updates to the Redesign Board may also include workshops and the Member/Officer Working Group will continue to progress the 10-point action plan.

Designation: Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate

Date: 26 February 2026

Authors: Sheila Armstrong, Chief Officer – Revenues & Commercialisation
Steven Bone, Business Development Lead

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

Food in Schools High Level Action Plan					
	Action	Outcome(s)	Responsible Service	Est. Timeline	Theme(s)
1	Undertake a comprehensive menu review	Increase pupil satisfaction levels, Reduce waste, Increase uptake	Catering/Education	June 2026	Take up rates (FSM)
2	Review nutritional guidelines to identify opportunities and barriers to matching local preferences	Increase pupil satisfaction levels, Reduce waste, Increase uptake	Catering	June 2026	Take up rates (FSM)
3	Improve integration/collaboration between Catering and Education Services	Improve nutritional and waste understanding for all pupils, Reduce waste, Increase uptake	Catering/Education	December 2026	Take up rates (FSM), Income generation

4	Develop and implement a strategic framework for enhancing school catering services.	Improved quality and consistency, Increased uptake, Enhanced dining experience for pupils, Reduce waste, More efficient and sustainable operating models.	Catering/Revenues	March 2027	Income generation, Operating model, Cost of food
5	Develop a “Food in Schools” parental engagement strategy.	Engage key stakeholder group, Increase Uptake, Reduce Waste	Catering/Education/ Communications	June 2026	Take up rates (FSM) Operating model, Cost of food
6	Review and action quality assurance arrangements.	Improve quality and consistency, Increase uptake, Reduce waste	Catering	June 2026	Take up rates (FSM), Operating model, Cost of food

7	Review current supplier contracts and explore opportunities for mixed procurement models balancing central cost savings versus local flexibility.	Diversify supply chain, Improve quality, Reduce waste	Catering/Procurement	June 2026	Take up rates (FSM), Operating model, Cost of food
8	Establish a waste tracking process for school meals	Reduce waste	Catering/Waste	December 2026	Cost of food
9	Research and assess opportunities for in-house distribution model	Diversify supply chain, Improve quality, Reduce waste	Catering/Fleet/Logistics	March 2027	Operating model, Cost of food
10	Explore opportunities for enhancing overall dining experience.	Increase uptake, Reduce waste	Catering/Properties	March 2027	Operating model, Cost of food