

*Primary 1 to 3  
Free School Meals Pilot  
The East Ayrshire Experience*

*Andrew Kennedy : Head of FM*



*The East Ayrshire Experience*

# WHERE IS EAST AYRSHIRE?

Robert Burns Country



East Ayrshire  
COUNCIL

## General Statistics

Population 120,000

Urban and Rural

High Multiple Deprivation areas

Unemployment EAC 6.1% v Scot. 4.3%

Poor Health Indicators 64% overweight

## Education & School Meals

43 Primary Schools

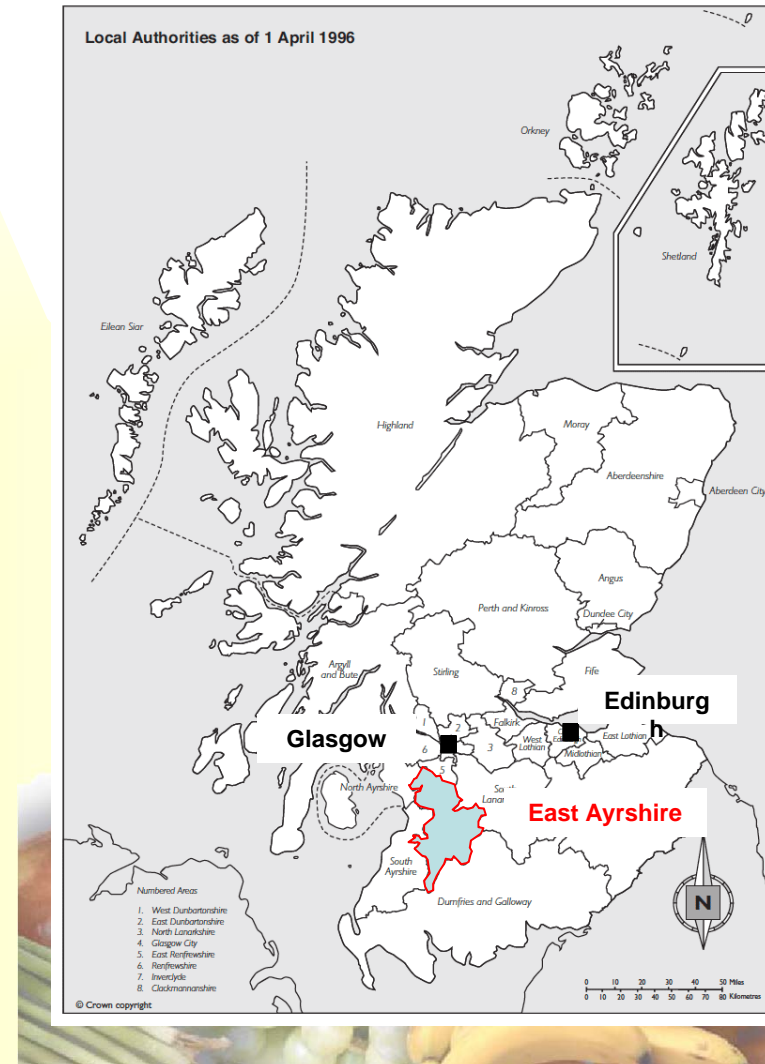
Primary Roll: 9388 to 8792 last 5 years

Free Meal Entitlement: 19% to 33%

Food For Life Gold Accreditation

Local Procurement & Ethical incentives

APSE Awards 2010, 2011



*The East Ayrshire Experience*

# THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Wealthier, Fairer, Smarter, Healthier, Safer, Greener

## School Food is high on the Agenda

Contribution to wider national themes  
More than just a commercial service  
Directly supporting families  
Media interest

## Policy Framework

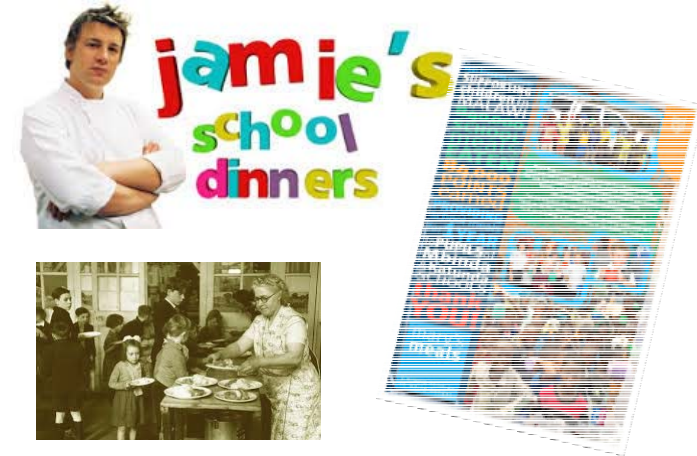
Curriculum for Excellence  
Obesity Strategy & health  
Sustainability & sourcing  
Procurement & Local Economy



The Scottish  
Government



East Ayrshire  
COUNCIL



*hungry for success*  
healthy eating + active living

1. *Whole School Approach*
2. *Better Quality food and Portions*
3. *National Nutrient & Food Standards*
4. *Closer to an Health & Education Service than a Commercial Service*



*The East Ayrshire Experience*

# THE SCOTTISH PILOT

Free School Meals for Primary 1 to 3



## The Aim

'To improve health by encouraging good eating habits at a young age'

## The Approach

5 local authorities involved  
35,000 pupils within the pilot  
£5 million investment from Government  
Ran from October 2007 to June 2008

## The Context

A variety of rural and urban schools  
A mixture of levels of deprivation  
Feedback sought from all stakeholders  
Independent evaluation



**The East Ayrshire Experience**

# THE OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

## Free School Meals for Primary 1 to 3

### Improvement in uptake

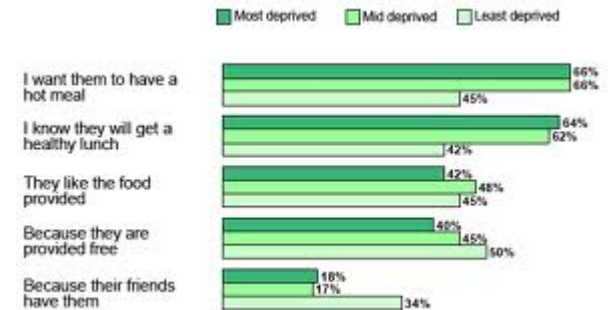
Uptake among all P1-P3 pupils increased from 53% to 75%  
P1-3 pupils who would have paid - 41% to 69%  
Children entitled to Free School Meals rose - 89% to 94%  
Rise in P 4-7 uptake from 47% to 50%

### No unexpected impacts or barriers

Physical space and Time pressures  
Required flexible, practical solutions  
Adequate-lead in time to plan and organise  
No adverse impact on the quality or quantity of food  
Minimal impact on school staff but a variable increase in catering staff  
Additional assistance in the dining room v teacher goodwill

### Health context and wider Benefits

*Some evidence the trial had a positive impact on the home environment  
Opportunity for children to try new foods  
Depending on how the service is organised socialisation benefits  
Greatest improvement across the most deprived communities*



*The East Ayrshire Experience*

# THE OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

## Free School Meals for Primary 1 to 3

### Costs

£1.79 per additional meal in Fife to £4.65 in Scottish Borders

Costs were higher where the increase in uptake was

Historically low, or where poor infrastructure

Economies of scale and productivity improvements can reduce costs

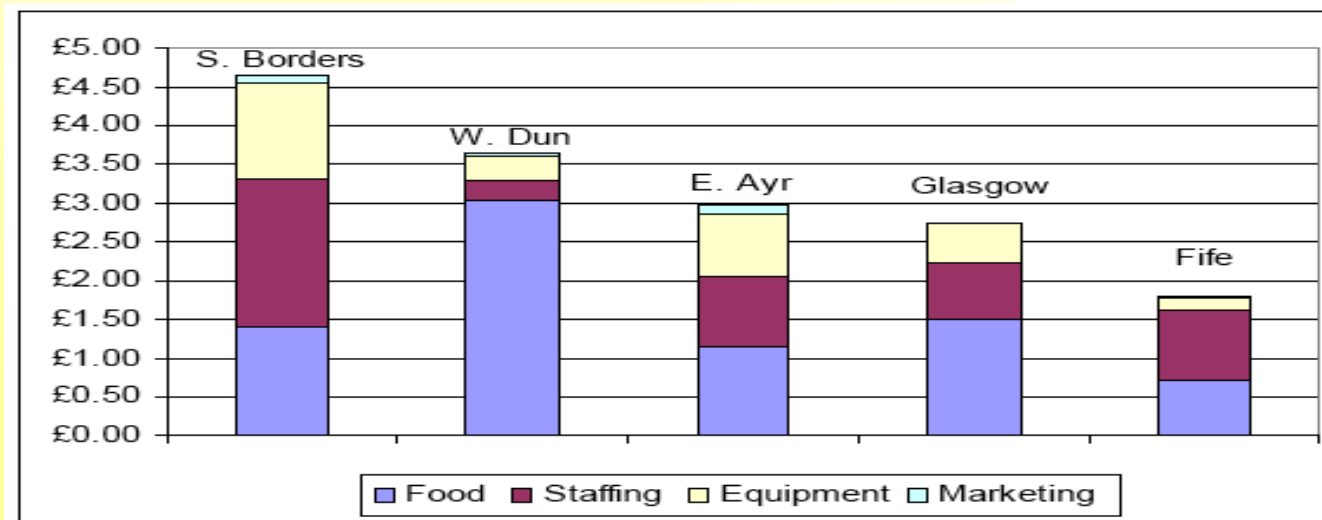
Start up costs need not be replicated in future years

Account for loss of income

Conclude that each Local Authority's costs will be unique



### Food, Staffing, Equipment and Marketing Costs



# THE OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

## Free School Meals for Primary 1 to 3

### Local Issues

- Good planning and good co-ordination beforehand
- Teachers, and catering staff very positive
- Popular service with parents
- Significantly increased uptake spiked at 80% stabilised at 70% (1,000 more children)
- Operated a family service to create a social ambience
- Identified need for assistance in the dining room.
- Small children need good organisation, support, encouragement
- Small number of schools did not have the space or capacity
- The trial improved the viability of the service and maintained employment where school rolls were declining
- We maintained Food for Life Gold Standard Service
- Substantial anecdotal evidence that behaviour and eating habits improved and sometimes benefit carried into the home



# *CONCLUSIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION*

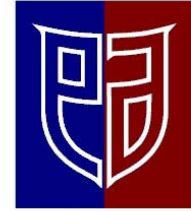
Free School Meals for Primary 1 to 3

## **What to think about**

- *Involvement of school and Head Teacher*
- *Early identification of issues per school*
- *Simplify menu and experience where possible*
- *Base staffing on target productivity and uptake*
- *Monitor food costs, uptake and income*
- *Identify staffing for dining hall support*
- *Utilise opportunity to promote full service*
- *Marketing and communication with parents*







**East Ayrshire**  
COUNCIL

## **ANDREW KENNEDY**

Head of Facilities Management  
Educational and Social Services  
East Ayrshire Council

Tel: 01563 576089

email: [Andrew.Kennedy@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Kennedy@east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

**onsite**  
onsite services@east-ayrshire.gov.uk