

SCOTTISH BORDERS
APSE CATERING AND CLEANING SERVICES REVIEW

Executive Summary

1. INTRODUCTION

This report summary has been written in the context of providing corporate stakeholders with an overview of the reviews findings, (supported by data gathered, consultation with key stakeholders and comparative evidence under final documentation) to inform decisions to be made regarding the future delivery of Education Catering and Cleaning Services within the Scottish Borders. It includes:

- Summary of Findings (Linked to the agreed scope of review)
- Analysis of Future Delivery Options
- Key Recommendations
- Service Improvement Planning

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

2.1 Challenge

A significant part of any 'best value review' is the 'challenge' process. This has concentrated on how well the current services are delivered, financial and contractual arrangements, management and organisational structures, the potential for Facilities Management (FM) / Partnership approaches and other related issues. In the interests of brevity, only those which directly support or inform the reviews 'Option Appraisal' (and recommendations), have been carried into this Executive Summary.

2.1.1 Current Service Delivery

Visits were made to 10 schools including Secondary/Primary Production, 'Regen' and Dining Centre sites. During each visit, varying levels of consultation took place with the Head Teacher, Catering and Cleaning Staff, in addition to detailed observation and the recording of service standards under the headings listed below.

Food Standards

The quality of ingredients, recipes used and overall food offer to pupils was found to be generally consistent with the standards now found or being implemented throughout Scotland. Attempts to adhere to National Nutritional Standards had however resulted in development of

a menu cycle which was poorly balanced in terms of pupil acceptability, resulting in reduced uptakes and accordingly defeating its primary 'diet and health' objectives. Subsequent menu planning (following these observations and consultation with the Scottish Governments inspectors) has resulted in a more balanced approach to the implementation and achievement of nutritional standards in the Borders.

As with other Services / Authorities throughout the UK, a greater recognition by (and co-ordination between) all stakeholders, on the wider issues of 'marketing' the school food offer will be needed to maintain / increase pupil uptakes for the service is to have maximum impact upon child diet and health outcomes. (Recognition of this is evident in the Free School Meal Pilot programme in Scotland).

Food Hygiene, Health & Safety

Generally high standards are being maintained and any weaknesses noted were either linked to the 'environment' or nature of (old) equipment still found in many kitchens.

Catering Service

The current service is comparable with that achieved Nationally and Catering Staff consistently displayed a genuine care for and knowledge of the children they served. Lunchtime supervision of pupils was found to be satisfactory in most Schools visited and in the best examples seen, both Catering Staff & Lunchtime supervision contribute significantly to the promotion of healthier choices and the 'social skills' of pupils.

Standards of Building Cleaning

Each cleaning operative has an area of the school to clean which, by national comparisons, are large (in terms of meters to be cleaned per hour) and may include washroom and toilet cleaning, class room areas (from nursery to science labs) and a range of surfaces and floor coverings. However, many staff do not have access to appropriate storage and or cleaners sinks and an absence of modern equipment / materials clearly limits them to routine cleaning methods – i.e., vacuuming, dusting and damp mopping. The vacuum cleaners in use by cleaning staff are not fit for purpose.

Some Janitorial staff were reported to have access to floor cleaning equipment but many 'hard floor' areas do not benefit from any machine treatment.

Reported reductions in cleaning hours have impacted upon the 'frequency' of cleaning individual areas and in some cases (i.e. – windows) no cleaning is scheduled by either cleaning or Janitorial staff.

These and other factors, clearly do not promote cleaning standards (or efficiency) across the range of areas and surfaces to be cleaned in schools, giving rise to the below average standards observed in many during our visits.

Catering & Cleaning Staff

The general Skills & Attitude of front line catering staff were found to be satisfactory to good, based more on the relationship with their Line (Contract) Supervisors and 'inherent catering disciplines' than on current evidence of formal Training and Development Support. Their limited understanding of 'financial management' belied the level of overall cost performance evident in the current service, which could however be placed at risk during any significant change in working practices or service demands (i.e., the Free School Meal pilot) in the absence of robust and timely performance monitoring disciplines.

Overview of Facilities

Catering Facilities (Kitchen and ancillary areas) are generally satisfactory and well maintained, but in keeping with the national picture, most production and service equipment is old, counters are unheated and no chilled display facilities exist to promote salad and other 'healthier' choices in Primary Schools. In many Schools, storage (particularly chilled) and preparation space would make full compliance with good hygiene practices and regulations difficult in the event of any significant increase in service uptakes or further use of fresh meats and vegetables.

Cleaning Stores and cupboards (to support the Cleaning Service) varied dramatically and in their organisation and cleanliness. Many of those seen (that are dedicated to the cleaning service) were wholly inadequate in terms of their size and location and in some schools, they are shared by cleaning and Janitorial staff, potentially limiting control / responsibility over equipment and products by either party.

Current Service Summary

Collectively, these observations represent:

- A catering service which is generally consistent with the delivery standards currently being achieved elsewhere in Scotland by the majority of (average performing) Local Authority Service Providers.
- A below average Building Cleaning service as measured by direct observation of the range and frequency of areas cleaned, the equipment and facilities available to support the service and the majority feedback secured from Schools.

Standards of *delivery* must however, be viewed in relation to *financial outcomes*, where the Scottish Borders has recorded an above average performance on most key Catering Indicators and clearly spends less on cleaning (recording amongst the highest level of square metres

cleaned per front line employee) than most other comparator Authorities. (see 2.3 below)

2.1.2 Financial / Service Arrangements and Documentation.

In keeping with other Scottish Authorities, the budgets for these services are held by Education to meet meal and other agreed charges levied by the Service Provider. Accordingly Schools have limited knowledge or interest in the financial dynamics of these services or how their financial performance relates to the range, extent and quality of service delivery. Indeed, at the outset of this review, neither the service provider, Education 'client' or other Corporate stakeholders had a clear basis upon which to assess 'value for money' (VFM) from these services.

This is compounded by the lack of clear (contemporaneous) specifications, particularly in the light of

- a) the dramatic change in local and national demands relating to Education Catering and
- b) the evident historical pressures to reduce Building Cleaning costs, coupled with a poorly documented interface with Janitorial Staff, whose functional responsibility for cleaning currently ranges from 0 – 60% by floor area from school to school.

Whilst there is some evidence of past investment by Education (and the Service Provider from past trading surpluses) in catering equipment and facilities, this has largely been limited to that needed to 'maintain' (rather than develop) the catering service and both Cleaning and Janitorial operatives now suffer from a severe lack of appropriate and functional cleaning equipment.

Neither service benefits from developed 'Management and Performance Reporting Systems and Procedures' and 'bespoke' reporting is therefore a drain on available financial / admin resources and inadequate to ensure targeted and timely corrective action by operational and management staff.

2.1.3 Management Structure Review

Background

The initial scope for this review identified the need to carry out a Structural review of Management and Support Staff resources, informed by a 'Basic Skills Assessment' audit.

This initial and 'basic' audit highlighted the need for a more detailed skills analysis, in order to inform the development of a 'best fit' organisational structure (otherwise based on the wider findings of the service review) and to effectively measure the capacity of the existing management employees to manage future service delivery under any new structure agreed.

Accordingly, and through consultation with the client during the latter part of this review, it was agreed that this more detailed Skills Audit would be carried out, commencing with a review of Job Descriptions and a further series of interviews with Managerial /Supervisory employees. It was also agreed that the detailed audit should include a clear and or recognised 'competency based' assessment process and that cognisance would be given to Council HR Policies and their existing PPD Programme.

Key Findings

Detailed analysis of the Skills Audit, including competencies exercise and the outcome from Interviews, highlighted a number of issues.

There is a clear gap between the Contract Officers perception of their core skills and the evidence gathered during the Skills Analysis process.

A similar situation was identified with the Support Teams albeit to a lesser extent. It was also evident that this team was unclear as to their status, key role and purpose and could contribute more to the effective delivery of services if this were clarified.

Conversely there is significant potential to improve and deliver services among the Contract Support Officers who are to all intents and purposes managing the unit based staff and who outscored their line Managers in seven of the eight competencies measured.

The existing organizational structure purports to deliver a twin hatted approach to the provision of Catering and Cleaning Services however it is evident that this has not been sufficiently developed with individuals tending to revert to their vocational background.

The need to improve communications at all levels was a constant theme during interviews and the absence (until recently) of open communication channels, regular structured meetings, and updates on initiatives particularly in relation to Catering has contributed to the sense of isolation expressed by many of the staff interviewed

This has resulted in certain service areas not receiving sufficient support or development as individuals have tended to concentrate on their strengths at the expense of other areas.

During the interviews there was unanimous agreement that training on core Hygiene and Health and Safety issues required to be addresses as immediate priority.

The failure by the Section to embrace the Council's PPDP process has resulted in Catering and Cleaning having no internal mechanism for linking the Business Plan to individual performance and development.

As a consequence, training is at best reactive and ad hoc and at worst unable to demonstrate that it adds any value to the business.

Consequently the failure to identify needs and provide appropriate and relevant training across the Department is potentially damaging to the Council's desire to achieve IIP accreditation in 2008

2.1.4 Potential for FM / Partnership Approaches

This review has been carried out at the same time as a wide ranging review into the future of Children's Services has been looking at how Scottish Borders can best organise schools for the future. Proposals being developed through the Children's Services Review will impact significantly on all aspects of services to schools including facilities management. Moreover the authority is in the process of determining its strategy for the management of the wider civic estate which will also have a major bearing on services such as cleaning, janitorial and building maintenance.

It is in this context that we have examined how the various elements of what is loosely termed facilities management, might best be provided to deliver improvement and cost efficiency. The major focus has been on catering and building cleaning, although consideration has also been given to janitorial services. Other services such as grounds and building maintenance, refuse collection and cleansing have not been explored but over the longer term should also be included as part of an overall approach to services to schools.

The facilities management approach to services to schools has been adopted in authorities throughout the UK, partly driven by whole school PPP initiatives but also and in particular in England, in response to a desire amongst head teachers for both cost efficiency and simplified management arrangements with a single point of contact. Head teachers remain concerned about the physical state of their schools but do not want to have spend their time acting as facilities managers. This requires maximum synergy between different service elements with uniform management models at service and school level.

At school level it has become apparent that there are significant areas of cross over between the role of janitors and that of cleaning staff. The duties associated with the role of janitors vary between schools with some involved with both cleaning and more limited aspects of minor building maintenance. In other schools janitors have other responsibilities including play ground supervision and grounds maintenance. There is a need for a common job description which in itself presents an opportunity to engage janitors in bringing services together in an FM approach for Schools. This approach should be driven by the wider Children's Services Review and will be a critical success factor if proposals for 'education hubs' are implemented. In

the interim it is not possible to propose any extension of the cleaning role of janitors because of historical gaps in employment rates and conditions of service. These will be resolved through job evaluation which exercise should also be an imperative for the creation of a generic job description.

In the long term it is possible to envisage a unified cleaning and janitorial service organised around educational hubs, perhaps with links to the FM needs of the wider estate. This latter aspect would need to be driven by the developing asset management strategy which is expected to bring about rationalisation of the estate and also to be a mechanism for releasing resources to fund much needed improvements to the cleaning service which has been under-resourced for some time.

2.2 Consultation

At the outset and throughout this review, particular emphasis has been placed on Consultation with Head Teachers, who, despite their lack of direct budget responsibility, have a significant interest in the delivery of these services and the impact they can have upon pupil health and welfare. This was achieved by service wide distribution of separate Questionnaires, formulated and driven by one to one meetings with individual School Heads during surveys of their Catering and Cleaning Services / Facilities. Given its evident overlap with Cleaning services, a separate questionnaire was formulated by E&LL regarding Janitorial Services and our comments below make reference to feedback from this survey where relevant to this review.

Questions asked of Head Teachers, can be broadly grouped under the following headings:

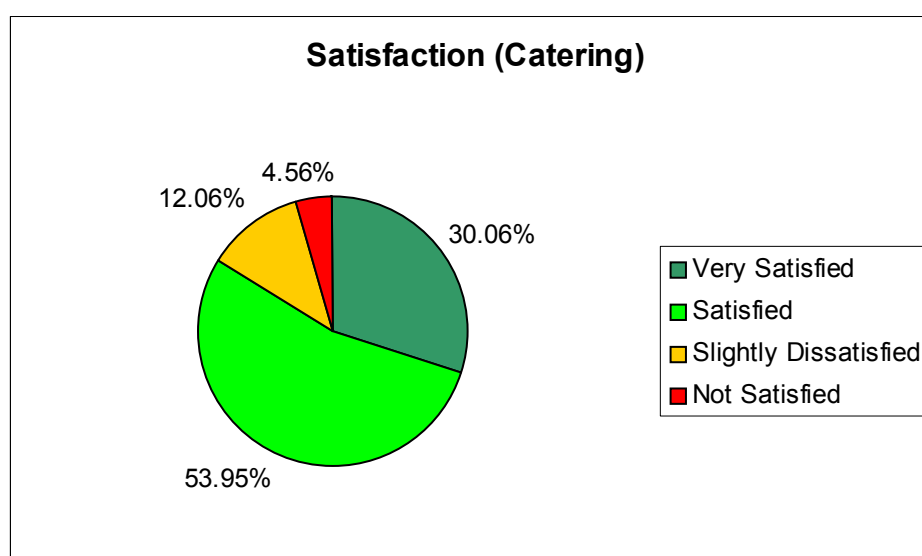
- The level of satisfaction with the current service provision.
- Staffing & Relationships
- Facilities and Environmental conditions
- The way the service is provided

Questionnaires were returned by circa 50% of Secondary and 75% of Primary Schools and their combined responses can therefore, arguably be seen to reflect a majority view on behalf of all schools within the Scottish Borders. In addition, this review canvassed the views of a wide range of other groups / 'stakeholders' who impact upon or are affected by the Education Catering and or Cleaning Services.

2.2.1 Head Teacher Consultation

Current Service Satisfaction Highlights

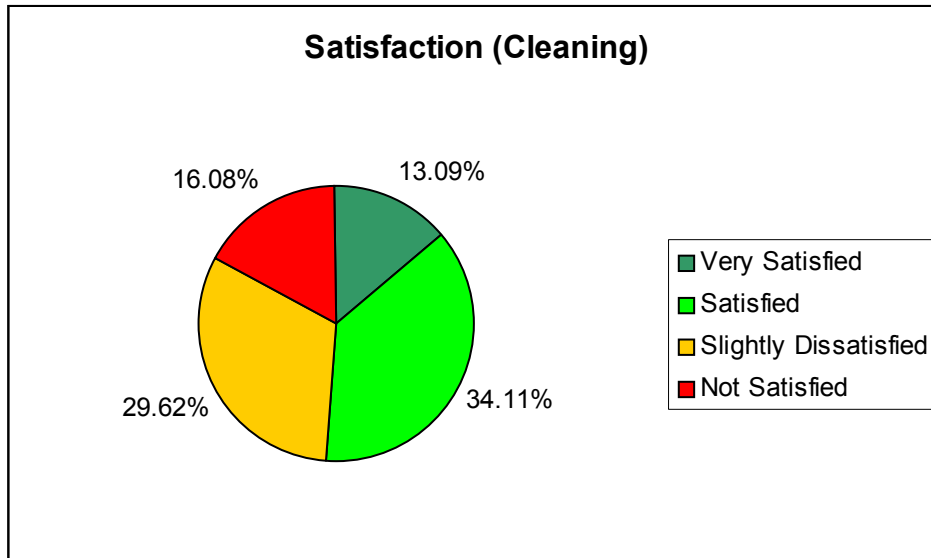
The following Graphs represent collective response to all questions directly relating to 'satisfaction' with the current services.



The 'Slightly Dissatisfied' responses were most evident in:

- The variety of food and menu choice (Reviewed since this survey)
- Whether the current meal price represents value to parents.
- The level of information schools receive about service costs and quality.

The areas in which Schools recorded the highest levels of satisfaction were in the 'care shown towards pupils' and 'hygiene standards' maintained by on-site catering staff.



This graph shows that nearly half of Schools are less than satisfied with element of the cleaning service – most evident in:

- General standards of cleaning
- Level of information about the service
- Adequacy of hours allocated to cleaning staff

The areas in which Schools recorded the highest levels of satisfaction were in the 'reliability and punctuality of cleaning staff'.

Staffing & Relationship Highlights:

No significant issues were raised by Schools in either Catering or Cleaning responses save:

- Some dissatisfaction with the contribution that stakeholders (particularly the Council) make to promoting the Catering service and
- The importance of establishing (and documenting) clarity between the roles of Janitorial and Cleaning Staff.

Facilities and Environmental issues:

- More than half of schools consider that dining environments are less than adequate in meeting their needs.
- More than half of schools consider that the quality and appropriateness of cleaning equipment (for building cleaning) is inadequate and all schools consider that investment is needed in this area.

The Way Services are provided

- A great majority of schools consider it 'quite' or 'very' important that they be able to 'influence' and or agree specific changes to services at their school in the future.
- A large majority consider it important to have a 'quality / client advisory' resource, independent of the Service Provider.
- Less than half of those responding to the Cleaning questionnaire, considered that the current 'single point of management contact' for catering and cleaning is of importance to them or that any extension of a Facilities Management approach would be of interest. Less than on third of schools recorded any interest to the same questions when asked within the Catering questionnaire.

Janitorial Services

As noted above, a separate questionnaire was formulated by E&LL regarding Janitorial Services which we understand will be subject to detailed analysis by them. However, the following highlights feedback on key areas of overlap with the Catering and particularly Cleaning Services:

- Less than half of Schools have a 'Full Time Janitor' a small percentage being Part Time and the balance being provided by a 'Peripatetic service managed by E&LL.
- The range of duties undertaken by Janitors differs significantly from school to school both in terms of 'functional' responsibility and frequency.
- The vast majority of schools consider it important to have a source of support and guidance relating to the recruitment, training and competencies of Janitorial Staff, together with clearer guidance on the 'standards of service to expect'.
- 94% of schools consider that central involvement in a monitoring and advisory role is important and all schools would like to see clearer documentation of roles and responsibilities.
- 64% of schools believe that alternative ways to provide the service should be reviewed.

These key points and more detailed analysis of feedback from the Head Teacher Questionnaires (across all three service areas), should

be used to inform the development of new forms of agreement (specifications) structures and support for the ongoing delivery of these services.

2.2.2 Survey of Parents Views on School Meals

Of the 119 parents canvassed in a 'clip board' survey, 70% reported that their Children take School Meals on one or more days every week.

Our survey highlighted that the 'average' child now only takes a school meal 3 days per week – their choice no doubt being affected by the 'acceptability' to children of the new dishes now incorporate within menus, to balance against the National Nutritional Standards.

Of the remaining 30%, parents gave the following reasons (ranked by frequency of response) for their child not taking a school meal:

- Doesn't like School Meals
- Prefers or friends have Pack Lunch
- Funny / Fussy Eater
- Cost (in larger families)

Parents ranked the following questions in order of importance to them (the percentages shown being 'very' important):

- Nutrition / Healthy Eating 93%
- Child Appeal 83%
- Choice and Variety 78%
- Value for Money 58%
- Social Activity / Fun 48%
- Convenience (for parent) 34%

2.2.3 Other Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation with other stakeholders identified a wide range of concerns and views on the future development of this service. The following bullet points highlight those areas in which a high degree of consistency exists between them:

Key Concerns:

- Historical concerns about 'relationships' with and within the service providers structure, individual competencies and their collective capacity to deliver efficiency and change.
- The services ability to respond to Corporate and National objectives relating to food quality, diet and health.
- A lack of clarity in specifications, roles and responsibilities, particularly within the Cleaning (and overlap with Janitorial) services.

- The absence of clear benchmarking and performance data (and the systems and procedures to drive it).
- A recognised lack of past investment specifically relating to the Food in Schools agenda (kitchen and dining environments) and targeted at standards and 'efficiency' within the day to day delivery of the cleaning service.

Whilst this review found evidence to support these concerns, it was also clear that the 'relationship' issues referred to above had given rise to an environment in which the service provider felt 'threatened' and under valued and perceived a lack of clear policy direction / leadership by the Council / corporate stakeholders.

The need for Member and Senior Officer leadership to establish clear policies and priorities for the future of these services remain, alongside the following objective identified by other Council stakeholders:

- Establishing the structures and relationships needed to optimise efficiency and deliver on National, strategic and local objectives.
- Better communication, documentation and more 'holistic' approaches to service delivery within and between Council departments and other key stakeholders
- Recognition of good practice and value within Council services and its commitment to service improvement, efficiency, health and well being.

2.3 Performance Comparisons

2.3.1 Comparative data has been taken from the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Performance Networks programme, to which the Authority has subscribed for this review and for ongoing annual benchmarking across a range of services.

The data used represents returns made by circa 60 Authorities for both Education Catering and Cleaning services nationally, which includes over 20 Scottish Authorities (now including the Scottish Borders).

Given the divergence between Scotland and the rest of the UK in Central and Local Government policies, investment and performance outcomes (not least in initiatives such as 'Hungry for Success') we have drawn reports for and measured the Authorities performance against Scottish Authorities only for this review.

Tables across the full range of indicators covering Education Catering and Building Cleaning have been provided as an attachment to this executive report, the following representing key highlights only for each service area.

2.3.2 Education Catering

Year 2005/06

PI No.	PI Description	Scottish Ave	Scot 'Top Quartile' (Where relevant)	Scottish Borders
1a)	Price (parental charge) per Primary Meal	£1.44	N/A	£1.58
1b)	Secondary Free Meal Allowance	£1.60	N/A	£1.96
4	Free Meal Uptake (Primary only)	78.5%	85.0%	92.7%
6a	Free Meal Uptake (Secondary)	52.7%	56.7%	77.7%
8	Paid Meal Uptake (Primary Only)	36.4%	39.8%	32.3%
10a	Paid Meal Uptake (Secondary)	37.4%	42.4%	39.2%
12	Total Cost Per Meal (Inc. CECs)	£2.46	N/A	£2.24
17a)	Primary Food Only Costs per Meal	£0.71	N/A	£0.59
31b	Subsidy per Meal (Excluding Free Meal Costs)	£0.79	N/A	£0.72
22	Mgt. Ratio to Total Staff Costs	11.6%	N/A	15.5%
13	Meals served per Staff Hr.	7.26	8.04	7.74
23	QA and Stakeholder Consultation	43	55	38
24	Human Resources and People Mgt.	36	58	Not recorded

Whilst helping to reduce 'subsidy' (PI 31b), the Borders Primary School meal pricing may be impacting upon Primary Paid meal uptakes, being the only 'hard' indicator where the services performance falls below the

Scottish Average. The extremely high uptakes of free meals (amongst the highest in Scotland) would suggest that the quality and range of food is not at issue and we would note that parents of 'paying' pupils did not raise 'value for money' as a priority issue during our survey but did seem to readily accept their children's food tastes and preferences.

On key cost indicators, the service performs well, supported by above average 'productivity' (PI 13) and effective procurement and food cost control.

In keeping with our direct observations, PI 22 evidences the higher than average Management to staff cost ratio in this service, which is however, not reflected in an appropriate focus on staff training and development, Quality Assurance or effective consultation with customers.

2.3.3 Building Cleaning

Year 2005/06

PI No.	PI Description	Scottish Ave	Scot 'Top Quartile' (Where relevant)	Scottish Borders
1a)	Cost per Sq Mtr. Cleaned (inc CECs)	£12.32	£11.15	£11.47
1b)	Sq Mtr. Cleaned per staff hour (Secondary)	8.7	N/A	9.1
4	Sq Mtr. Cleaned per staff hour (Primary)	7.8	N/A	7.6
6a	Sq Mtr. Cleaned per annum per front line employee	1280	1406	1543
8	Front line Staff cost per Mtr. cleaned	£9.97	£9.27	£8.42
10a	Material cost ratio	2.7%	N/A	2.2%
12	Equipment cost ratio	1.3%	N/A	0.5%
17a)	Front line employee cost ratio	84.7%	N/A	73.6%
31b	Other costs as a %age of total expenditure	5.7%	N/A	14.2%
23	QA and Stakeholder Consultation	79.6		12
24	Human Resources and People Mgt.	36.1		23

This table shows the Scottish Borders to have:

- A highly competitive overall cost per square metre cleaned.
- Above average 'productivity' in secondary schools and a significantly higher total area cleaned per front line employee.
- Below average cleaning material and significantly lower equipment replacement costs.

- As with Catering, a high 'Other cost' ratio (inc. Management / Support), whilst falling well below average scores on QA and Human Resources

3. ANALYSIS OF FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

3.1 External Partnering

It is understood that some consideration has been given to bringing in an external supplier to provide services to the Council's schools along similar lines to those provided under the three PPP contracts.

This review has found no evidence of a desire amongst schools themselves to see key aspects of Facilities Management (i.e. -building maintenance, janitorial, catering and or cleaning services etc.) externalised into contractual arrangements that in our view, might restrict options for the long term and therefore constrain the Children's Services review.

Further, National benchmarking has indicated that the current Catering Service is generally cost effective and that issues with cleaning standards are at least in part, due to aggressive cost reductions in the past and beyond reasonable efficiency expectations and current market rates.

Aside from the restricting nature of long term contractual relationships there is also evidence emerging that PFI contractors in England are looking for significant increases in rates for FM services at contract review stages, suggesting that they are not immune to the rising costs that beset direct service provision.

On balance we do not think that an approach to the market would deliver any benefit and that any decision so to do should be driven by the long term vision emerging from the Children's Services Review and the developing Asset Management Strategy, rather than as an inappropriate response to difficulties relating to the need for management reorganisation within the existing services.

3.2 Service Re-Structuring

Evidence gathered for this review clearly indicates that some reorganisation of Management structures, roles and responsibilities will be required if Catering, Cleaning (and Janitorial Services) are to remain as an internal service provision. Beyond development of management competencies under the existing structure, options would include:

- Combining Catering, Cleaning and Janitorial functions into a single (Soft FM) Management Team, either under a new combined Head of Service or transferred to the Technical Services Building Management FM Function.
- Create dedicated Catering Service Team, transferring Cleaning for consolidation with Janitorial Services to either Education or the Technical Services Building Management FM Function

We would discount the first option at this stage, given that we do not believe that it would be appropriate to incorporate school catering into a wider FM approach, for the following key reasons:

- Our Survey found no importance to Schools in maintaining multi functional Management (but did find a significant level of satisfaction with the current catering service.)
- Catering is a service to school pupils, rather than to school buildings and does not therefore sit comfortably, particularly at authority management level, with services that are directly concerned with the physical use ability of schools.
- The Scottish Borders is to be a pilot for the Scottish Government's free school meals initiative which presents a huge logistical challenge that will be best met by dedicated management of the service.
- Having made progress in recent months, dedicated management of the catering service would better maintain focus and momentum on still developing child diet and health agenda.

We are however conscious that both the Cleaning and Janitorial services require significant re-modelling, built on a review and or revision of specifications, service needs and human resource implications and that the burden of 'transfer' might be unrealistic in the short term.

The Children's Services Review offers some real opportunities over the longer term for integrating and coordinating all of the services the Council provides to schools. The Asset Management Strategy could represent a way of releasing resources to ensure that these services are consistent with a renewed vision for education in Scottish Borders. For the moment though we must recommend that the catering, cleaning and janitorial services should be managed in a manner that will maximise synergy between them, for example by exploring the role of janitors in relation to the supervision of cleaning but that they are not at this stage brought together as a single FM service.

In the longer term and driven by the outcomes of the Children's Services Review it would be desirable to develop an offer to schools which brings together a number of 'Soft' FM services including cleaning and minor element of day to day building maintenance, into a coordinated offer using the janitorial service to coordinate and supervise services at the school level. School catering should probably be left out of this arrangement and continue to be provided as a dedicated service to school children as opposed to schools.

4. RECOMMENDATION

In the light of our analysis above and the findings of the Skills Audit, we would recommend an Interim Management Structure, which maintains Building Cleaning within Technical Services whilst establishing dedicated functional Management for it and Catering Services.

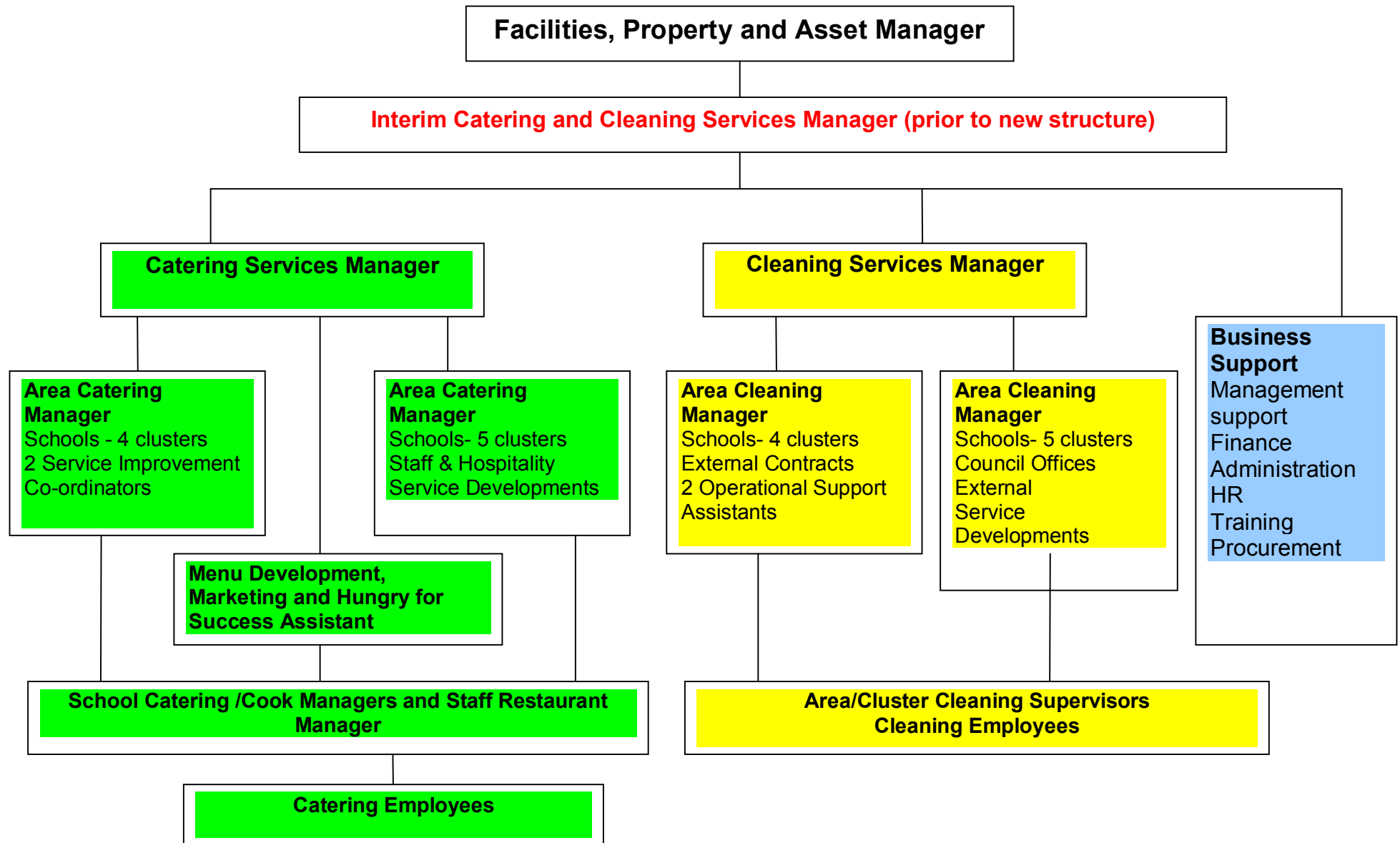
In this respect, we understand that Technical Services are prepared to maintain the Interim 'Head of Service' resource provided by APSE into next year, which we believe will allow time for a measured review of the specifications, service and equipment needs towards and improved Cleaning Service, whilst E&LL adopt a similar approach to this and the human resource implications associated with the Janitorial Function.

On completion of this process, (and the Children's Services Review) greater clarity may exist to enable consideration of the potential benefits of a Cleaning service combined with or managed by the Janitorial Function.

In addition to the proposed organisation structure below (designed to focus new and existing skills in each distinct service area) we would make the following key recommendations relating to development of the services key resource – its people:

- A phased and monitored introduction of the Council's PPDP should be introduced for Management and Support Staff with immediate effect.
- Develop and introduce an 'abbreviated' form of PPDP for Front Line Staff.
- A series of 'road shows' should be delivered to present the Business and Service Improvement Plans (for each service) and to outline what arrangements are to be introduced for improving communications, training and the development of all staff to achieve their potential.
- Establish the frequency and 'Core Agenda' for a range of Operational / Support Staff and 'Inter Departmental' meetings, to improve communication within and between the service, Schools, E&LL and other stakeholders.
- Redraft existing job descriptions to reflect roles within the revised structure and alignment to the Council's Behavioural Competencies Framework.
- The Authority may wish to consider commissioning further external support to accelerate these and other 'people development' initiatives.

SCOTTISH BORDERS CATERING AND CLEANING SERVICES



Implementing the revised structure arrangements

Whilst the revised structure proposals outlined above would generate an 'efficiency gain', it would require that at least 3 individuals at managerial level be considered candidates for redeployment.

During the course of the Skill Audit, one of these has made it clear that they would consider leaving the authority if a suitable inducement were provided.

We recognise the necessity to align these proposals with existing Council arrangements including where appropriate, discussions with Trades Unions over the redeployment of surplus / displaced employees.

Whilst initial clarification on such an arrangements was sought during preliminary discussions with the Personnel Adviser, further detailed discussion and guidance for our Interim Manager, would be required on the procedures for achieving this.

5. SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

In the event that the 'structural' recommendations arising from this review are adopted, there will be a need to commence detailed 'Service Improvement Planning' at both a 'Strategic' and 'Operational level.

To aid in that process, we have provided a sample 'Service Improvement Planning Structure' and have carried forward below, key observations / recommendations made throughout this review, as bullet points under these two key Headings.

These are given as an initial guide only and more detailed consultation with Schools and other stakeholders is recommended following completion of the Children's Services review, which it is hoped will help to inform the most appropriate operational and support structures (and line reporting responsibilities) in the longer term.

5.1 Strategic (Short Term)

- Establish Corporate and Political Service Delivery and Funding Priorities including investment in:
 - Catering Equipment and Environments
 - Cleaning Equipment / Technology.
 - Our 'People', - Front line, Management and Support Resources
 - Performance monitoring Systems and Procedures.
- Corporate (Human Resources) support to any agreed organisational structure changes including procedural guidance, Training and Development support, redeployment and general 'change management' counselling.
- Assessment of the cost / benefits of Job Evaluations in terms of:
 - The cost of ongoing service delivery and
 - Implications relating to the potential consolidation of Janitorial and Cleaning functions (including potential benefits).
- Consider future 'Pricing Policy' for School Meals (Against Scottish averages) and the contribution which can be made to 'Marketing; the service' by the wider Council and Corporate stakeholders, particularly following cessation of the Free School Meals Pilot project.
- Review Catering, Cleaning and Janitorial SLAs and Specifications, a process requiring:
 - Consultation and agreement between Schools, Corporate, 'Commissioning' and Provider stakeholders, to establish and review 'affordability' against desired 'core service levels'.

- Clarity in core service pricing and charging arrangements
- The flexibility to deliver any 'premium' services required by individual schools but including the costing and charging arrangements appropriate to those individual requirements.

Priorities in this process should be on the Cleaning Service (by the Providers 'Interim' Management Team) and the Janitorial Service (by E&LL support services).

- In conjunction with operational colleagues, prepare a detailed 'Service Improvement Plan' for each service. (Led by Technical Services / E&LL and supported by the Interim Management Team) and linked to future Business Plans and budgets.

5.2 Operational (Short Term)

- Commence implementation of agreed Management, Financial & Admin Support Structures.
- Undertake a detailed review Head Teacher (Review survey) Feedback to identify and resolve specific (critical) Catering or Cleaning issues with Individual Schools
- Support the development of revised Specifications for the Cleaning Service and advise on the Technical and cost (revenue and capital) implications of varying levels of service / standards.
- Support the drafting and ongoing measurement of Key Improvement Activities' linked to individual Service Improvement Plans
- Plan for and deliver basis Hygiene, Health and Safety and 'Nutrition' Training for Unit Catering Staff – aligned to current and developing National standards.

5.3 Operational (Ongoing)

- Menu Planning, Food & Nutrition
 - Balancing Nutritional Standard targets against pupil 'acceptability'.
 - Develop appropriate 'Food Policies and Specifications' for the service (in conjunction with SLA development)
- The Development and 'engagement' of Staff.
In addition to the Structural and People Development recommendations made in 4 above:
 - Secure the understanding and commitment of staff to the 'change' and Service Improvement process (simple lines of communication).
 - The development of a 'Training Plan' for each service, linking Business / Service Improvement objectives to Personal Development Plans.

- Focus on attainment of IIP status by 2008.
- Engage with E&LL and support Schools in the development of Lunchtime Supervisory Staff (Inc Training support re children's social skills and consumption of healthy choices)
- Systems & Procedures
 - Identify minimum requirements for the effective monitoring of service delivery and financial management (enabling appropriate, targeted and timely corrective action by operational staff).
 - Identify minimum school and corporate requirements for periodic reporting and information on service quality and performance.
 - Liase with direct and Technical Services Support Staff on the acquisition / development of both operational and periodic school / corporate reporting requirements.
- Benchmarking
 - Develop Performance Reporting capability around Performance Networks and local financial and quality indicators.
 - Develop capacity to engage with Performance Networks, APSE advisory and local (Scottish) network groups towards analysing, recognising, adopting and adapting 'best practice'.
- Marketing and Promoting the School Meals Service
 - Promote the Joint 'Marketing' of the service with Schools and other Stakeholders (including the identification of Council, E&LL or other Agency initiatives / funding for this purpose).
 - Engage with E&LL and 'External Partners' on health promotion and maximise funding opportunities
 - Improved co-ordination with and support to schools in delivering 'nutritional education' within the curriculum.
 - Promote wider 'engagement' of both Pupils and Parents.

5.4 Financial Implications

Combined, and built upon within a competent Service Improvement Plan, these recommendations represent an opportunity to meet the reasonable expectations of Schools and corporate stakeholders relating to future service quality and longer term cost efficiency.

However, against a projected annual saving in the proposed structure (Section 4 above) some investment is now needed to develop the strength in the Cleaning and Catering Services capacity to deliver and maintain consistently high quality services, together with service specific investment in Cleaning Equipment and Catering environments.

Key areas for **Investment** will be in:

- People
- Catering Equipment, Kitchen and Dining Room Environment
- Cleaning Equipment and Technology
- Systems and Procedures for Performance Monitoring

Ongoing costs will be required to cover the increase in cleaning hours in order to achieve national cleaning standards.

Short term **resourcing costs** will be required in order to:

- Develop the Service Improvement Plans
- Redraft the Catering and Cleaning Services Specifications.
- Develop Service Level Agreements for the Clients.