

# **COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

Wednesday 8 November 2006

Session 2

£5.00

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body 2006.

Applications for reproduction should be made in writing to the Licensing Division,  
Her Majesty's Stationery Office, St Clements House, 2-16 Colegate, Norwich NR3 1BQ  
Fax 01603 723000, which is administering the copyright on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate  
Body.

Produced and published in Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body by Astron.

---

# CONTENTS

Wednesday 8 November 2006

	Col.
<b>ITEMS IN PRIVATE</b> .....	4213
<b>SCHOOLS (HEALTH PROMOTION AND NUTRITION) (SCOTLAND) BILL: STAGE 1</b> .....	4214
<b>SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION</b> .....	4264
Land Registration (Scotland) Rules 2006 (SSI 2006/485) .....	4264
<b>STANDING ORDERS (CHANGE)</b> .....	4265

---

## COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

### 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2006, Session 2

#### CONVENER

\*Karen Whitefield (Airdrie and Shotts) (Lab)

#### DEPUTY CONVENER

\*Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD)

#### COMMITTEE MEMBERS

\*Scott Barrie (Dunfermline West) (Lab)  
\*Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab)  
Christine Grahame (South of Scotland) (SNP)  
\*Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green)  
\*John Home Robertson (East Lothian) (Lab)  
\*Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP)  
\*Dave Petrie (Highlands and Islands) (Con)

#### COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Chris Ballance (South of Scotland) (Green)  
Alex Johnstone (North East Scotland) (Con)  
Christine May (Central Fife) (Lab)  
Mike Rumbles (West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine) (LD)  
Ms Sandra White (Glasgow) (SNP)

\*attended

#### THE FOLLOWING GAVE EVIDENCE:

Mary Allison (NHS Health Scotland)  
Jill Ardagh (British Soft Drinks Association)  
Audrey Birt (Diabetes UK)  
Len Braid (Automatic Vending Association)  
Gaynor Bussell (Scottish Food and Drink Federation)  
Dr Cathy Higginson (Expert Working Group on Nutritional Standards for the Regulation of School Lunches and Standards for the Regulation of Food and Drinks Outwith the School Lunch)  
David McCall (British Dental Association)  
Heather Peace (Expert Working Group on Nutritional Standards for the Regulation of School Lunches and Standards for the Regulation of Food and Drinks Outwith the School Lunch)  
Hugh Raven (Soil Association)

#### CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE

Steve Farrell

#### SENIOR ASSISTANT CLERK

Katy Orr

#### ASSISTANT CLERK

Catherine Fergusson

#### LOCATION

Committee Room 6



## Scottish Parliament Communities Committee

*Wednesday 8 November 2006*

[THE CONVENER *opened the meeting at 09:31*]

### Items in Private

**The Convener (Karen Whitefield):** I open the 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Communities Committee in 2006. I remind all present that mobile phones and BlackBerrys should be turned off. I have received apologies from Christine Grahame, who is unable to attend the meeting.

Item 1 concerns item 5, which is consideration of a draft report on the budget process 2007-08, and item 6, which is the committee's work programme. Committee members are asked to consider whether to take those items in private. If there is no objection, do we agree to take items 5 and 6 in private?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

## Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill: Stage 1

09:32

**The Convener:** Item 2 is consideration of the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Bill. We will hear from three panels of witnesses and I welcome the first panel. We have been joined by Cathy Higginson, who is the chair of the expert working group on nutritional standards for the regulation of school lunches and standards for the regulation of food and drinks outwith the school lunch, and Heather Peace, who is a member of the group. I thank them for joining us this morning. The expert working group's full title is quite a mouthful and I am not sure that even an acronym would be much better.

**John Home Robertson (East Lothian) (Lab):** It would be an indigestible acronym.

**The Convener:** I ask the witnesses to set the scene for the committee by telling us a little bit about the expert working group, such as how it is made up, what its remit is and how it has been involved in the bill.

**Dr Cathy Higginson (Expert Working Group on Nutritional Standards for the Regulation of School Lunches and Standards for the Regulation of Food and Drinks Outwith the School Lunch):** Good morning. On behalf of the expert working group, I thank the committee for giving us the opportunity to give evidence to you. In answer to your question, I will outline briefly the group's remit, its membership, how its meetings have worked, my role as chair and the information that we drew on to inform our discussions.

The expert working group's remit was to develop proposed nutritional standards for the regulation of school lunches in primary and secondary schools in Scotland and to propose standards for the regulation of food and drinks made available to children and young people in school outwith the school lunch. The group comprised 10 external members, as well as colleagues from the Scottish Executive Education Department and Health Department. The Executive appointed our members, who brought a range of relevant expertise to the table. They comprised academic and public health nutritionists; a representative of local authority caterers; a dental expert, who was nominated by the chief dental officer; representatives of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education; and an independent nutritionist who had been very involved in the work of the school meals review panel in England—she joined us for the first two meetings only.

We met on four occasions in September and October to develop the proposals, and each

meeting was for a full working day. The Executive approached me to chair the group. My day job is as food and health programme manager at NHS Health Scotland, which is the national agency for improving health in Scotland. My colleague Heather Peace, who is a member of the group, has contributed significantly to its work—as, obviously, have the other members. Her day job is as a senior scientific officer at the Food Standards Agency Scotland, which is based in Aberdeen.

The sources of information that we drew on were the policy document “Hungry for Success: A Whole School Approach to School Meals in Scotland”, which contains nutritional standards and a wide range of guidance that schools have been implementing since 2003; the recommendations of the Caroline Walker Trust on school meals; the recommendations of the School Food Trust in England; and recommendations from the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition—formerly the Committee on Medical Aspects Of Food and Nutrition Policy—which is a United Kingdom-wide committee that sets nutritional standards for the country. We also drew extensively on the professional experience that members of the group brought to the table. I hope that that gives the committee a sense of the way in which we worked and the information that we drew on.

**The Convener:** That is very helpful.

What are the key features of the group’s recommendations? The committee is particularly keen to learn how what you propose for nutrient standards differs from what is currently in place in our schools.

**Dr Higginson:** It will probably be helpful if I talk separately about lunch and about food and drink outwith the school lunch. Our submission contains a lot of information and it is probably easier to go through it if I focus first on lunch.

We opted to set separate standards for food at lunch and food outwith lunch. The nutritional standards that we propose for lunch comprise both nutrient standards and food and drink standards, as you will have seen from our submission, whereas the nutritional standards for outwith lunch are for food and drinks only. I will explain that a little more. The term “nutritional standards” is an overarching term, which includes both those types of standards. The term “nutrient standards” refers to matters such as the percentage energy from fat and the amount of vitamin C, vitamin A, folate and so on that we wish to see children derive from a school lunch. Those standards need to be supported by food and drink standards. I will explain further why that is as I move through the standards.

First, the nutrient standards are set out on page 6 of our submission. They are based on the view

that the school lunch should provide approximately a third of each child’s daily energy—or calorie—intake and protein, fibre and identified vitamin and mineral intakes. We opted for a third because, across a typical day, approximately 30 per cent of a child’s nutritional requirements should be met by lunch, approximately 30 per cent by the evening meal and 20 per cent by breakfast, which leaves a further allowance of 20 per cent for food and drinks between meals. That approach is generally accepted.

The fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate and sugar standards that we propose are based on percentage of food energy in line with the recommendations that have been set out by SACON, to which I referred. The standards are based on average values of a school lunch. As “Hungry for Success” does, we would look for standards to be met on the basis of the composition of a lunch averaged over five consecutive school days. Meeting the standards is not based on each individual lunch but based on an average over a defined period of time. Again, that is a standard nutritional approach that is widely taken in such work.

I reassure the committee that the different nutritional needs of children of different ages are accounted for in the approach. We would be happy to go into that further if members have additional questions about that.

It is also important to point out that our recommendations relate to food and drinks that are provided rather than to those that are eaten. It is clearly not possible to legislate for how much children eat off their plate. What we can do is consider what is provided to them and encourage them through other means to consume it.

A further important point to make is that the standards are founded on the principle of achievability. In other words, we should not set people up to fail by making the standards overly difficult to achieve. We know from our experience of the implementation of “Hungry for Success” that some elements of it have proved to be more than challenging—in fact, they have proved to be pretty much impossible to achieve in the short term. We are mindful of that point in setting the standards. That is especially important as we move from guidance—which has been the status of “Hungry for Success”—towards statute.

I will say a little more about what we mean by achievability. It is not simply that meals must meet the nutrient standards—that the meal on the plate must be nutritionally excellent—but that meals must be tasty and appealing to young people. Those are the two parts of achievability. We do not want to perpetuate the myth that healthy food is just bread and water and cannot be tasty and appealing. Young people must want to eat the

meals and the group has been prepared to compromise in certain areas—over sodium levels, for example—to ensure that schools have flexibility. The group felt that that was important in order to support the bill's wider objective of increasing the uptake of school meals.

Another key feature of the standards is that they include an element of phasing, both in the food and drinks standards and in the nutrient standards. In the nutrient standards, we propose to phase in the reduction in sodium levels and to achieve the desired standard by 1 January 2010.

I have been talking about the key features of the nutrient standards. Would you like me to pause there, or to go straight on to the food and drinks standards? They are part of the same package.

**The Convener:** Please carry on.

**Dr Higginson:** The food and drinks standards are designed to work alongside the nutrient standards, and vice versa. The mandatory nutrient standards will ensure that lunch menus do not include too many foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar, which are the key dietary elements that we are trying to reduce. Those standards will also ensure that menus contain sufficient protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals for children and young people.

However, additional mandatory food and drinks standards are needed for two key reasons. First, we have to ensure that foods with particular health benefits over and above their specific individual nutrient components are emphasised in the food that is provided to young people. That applies specifically to fruit and vegetables and to oily fish. We would be happy to go into that in more detail if you wish us to.

Secondly, the food and drinks standards address particular issues of concern in the diets of Scottish children—for example, the high consumption of confectionery and soft drinks. Committee members will see from our paper that the food and drinks standards are relatively few. As you may be aware, “Hungry for Success” contains—as well as its nutrient standards—extensive guidance on food and drinks in relation to the lunch service. It would not be possible or desirable to recommend that all that guidance be translated into legislation; legislation must not be burdensome and cumbersome. We have therefore identified particular areas in the guidance that we feel are especially important for health. The foods that are not mentioned have not been ignored but will be picked up in catering guidance for the people whose job it will be to implement the measures. That means not only caterers but staff in schools and local authorities.

I should draw committee members' attention to another key feature of the food and drinks

standards—the phasing. Earlier, I mentioned phasing for the nutrient standards; we also propose the phasing out of artificially sweetened soft drinks by 2010.

There are differences between primary and secondary schools as regards the standards that we propose. In general, the standards should be applied equally to primary and secondary schools, but there are two specific exceptions, which both relate to drinks. Artificially sweetened drinks and tea and coffee should be available only in secondary schools and not in primary schools. That is generally already the case, so the phasing that I spoke about refers to phasing artificially sweetened drinks out of secondary schools by 2010. Most primary schools have already removed such drinks.

Those are the key features of the food and drink standards and the main points that we wanted to mention.

If we take the standards for lunch in the round, the expert group's proposals are not significantly different from the provisions in “Hungry for Success”. We should remember that “Hungry for Success” covers lunch only. The key difference is that we identified some aspects of the “Hungry for Success” guidance that are sufficiently important for them to be put into statute and they form the food and drink standards that I outlined to you.

The nutrient standards that we propose for school lunches are no more demanding than those in “Hungry for Success”, but they are set at levels that will continue to drive up the nutritional quality of the food that is served in schools. Some of the standards, particularly the one on sodium, are less demanding but more realistic. We have learned from the experience of implementing the hungry for success programme and the original guidance on it. As a group, we try to be pragmatic but also to continue to drive up the nutritional quality of food in schools.

09:45

**Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green):** What is the difference between your approach to lunches and your approach to other food and drink?

**Dr Higginson:** Shall I talk about the key features of the standards for food and drink outwith lunch and compare those with the standards for lunch?

**Patrick Harvie:** That would be helpful.

**Dr Higginson:** The expert working group agrees with the bill's premise that it is important to set standards for food and drinks throughout the school day and not just for lunch. It is important for health-promoting schools to ensure that foods that are provided free or for sale outwith lunch do not

undermine the standards of the school lunch. It is important to communicate the same messages on nutrition at every part of the school day. As we are probably all aware, young people are quick to spot double standards.

The expert working group disagrees with the view that children should be presented with choices between healthy and less healthy food and drinks in school. We argue that there is plenty of choice of less healthy foods outwith school and that schools should take the opportunity to show children and young people what a healthy diet is. They learn a lot about the theory of healthy diets in school and they are given support in thinking about how to implement that, but schools have the opportunity to show them what healthy food looks like on the plate, in vending machines and in other food outlets in schools. That is the best way to help them to make healthy choices. The education system should be an exemplar environment in that respect.

In considering food and drink that is available outwith lunch, we do not use nutrient standards, because there are various patterns of consumption during the school day. We can set nutrient standards for the school lunch, which usually consists of a main course and perhaps a dessert, but it is not realistic to set nutrient standards for other food, such as breakfast or snacks, and we could not monitor such standards. That is why we simply discuss the food and drinks that schools should make available. We classify items by type and not by the setting in which they are made available. The standards apply regardless of whether the food or drink is served at a breakfast club, at a tuck shop or by a hot catering service that the school provides during the mid-morning or afternoon break.

Like the previous food and drink standards, our standards do not cover all foods that could be available outwith lunch. However, that does not mean that we have not made provision for those foods—they will be covered by the catering guidance that I mentioned earlier.

We are aware of the need to avoid overregulation and have therefore recommended that manufactured meat products and their vegetarian and fish-based equivalents should be dealt with in guidance. That is why such things are not on the list, although they are a big issue in respect of break times in Scotland.

In setting the standards, we were mindful of the need to allow for the availability of a wide range of different types of food and drink outwith lunch times so that there will be variety and in order not to disadvantage any particular mode of food or drink service. For example, a large range of food can be supplied in schools by vending machines, which are popular outlets. The standards for drinks

are the same outwith lunch times, so all artificially sweetened drinks will be phased out in schools by 2010. Such drinks will not go immediately under our proposals.

**Patrick Harvie:** Are the food and drinks standards applicable to both sections of your paper?

**Dr Higginson:** Yes.

**Patrick Harvie:** That is a good idea for several reasons. What is your rationale for supporting the phasing out of artificially sweetened drinks?

**Dr Higginson:** I will be honest: there was a lot of debate in the expert working group about the phasing out of artificially sweetened drinks. We think that the argument about drinks that are sweetened by sugar has already been won on the ground of oral health. However, some members of the group thought that although there is no place for sugar-sweetened drinks in schools, arguably there is a place for zero-calorie artificially sweetened drinks to help to tackle the epidemic of obesity that Scotland is experiencing. Some people thought that if artificially sweetened soft drinks could not be bought in schools, people might buy full-sugar versions of them outside the school gates instead and that it would therefore be better if people were given the option of buying zero-calorie drinks in schools.

As I mentioned, a dental health expert who was nominated by the chief dental officer was a member of the group and, after discussing the matter at length, the group was ultimately swayed by the dental health arguments. Flavourings and other added acids in artificially sweetened drinks—whether those drinks are carbonated or still—contribute significantly to dental erosion in Scotland. I am talking not only about drinks such as Diet Irn Bru, Diet Coke and Diet Pepsi but about the flavoured waters that we are increasingly seeing on the market, which also have acidic flavourings added to them. Many of us are familiar with the problem of dental caries, which involves sugar being digested and rotting teeth, but I am talking about the erosive effect of acid on the surface of teeth. There is a real problem with that in Scotland.

The importance of hydration has been much debated, and we are not arguing that adequate hydration in schools is not critical. The bill deals with and makes provision for the supply of water to children in schools whenever they need it. It has been argued that good hydration requires the availability of a variety of drinks—we agree with that—but the group took the view that the variety of drinks that will be allowed under our proposed standards, even after 2010, when artificially sweetened drinks will not be permitted in secondary schools, will be ample to meet that

need. Therefore, there is no need for the drinks in question on that basis. The dental health argument is critical.

**Patrick Harvie:** That is helpful, but I am slightly puzzled as to why it has been proposed that only drinks with such additives should be removed from schools. Clearly, nutrient levels are important, but how would the working group respond to the suggestion that nutritional value is about more than just nutrient levels and is about such things as freshness, preparation procedures, cooking—or overcooking—and the presence of additives? Some of the artificial sweeteners that we are talking about are being used everywhere these days, in foods as well as drinks.

**Heather Peace (Expert Working Group on Nutritional Standards for the Regulation of School Lunches and Standards for the Regulation of Food and Drinks Outwith the School Lunch):** The issue of additives and sweeteners came up in the context of our discussions on drinks. We took the Food Standards Agency's advice on the safety of additives and sweeteners, which was resoundingly that they are safe. The Food Standards Agency and the European Food Safety Authority have the role of legislating and regulating to ensure that foods with additives and sweeteners are safe for children to eat. We took the view that we could not remove such foods on the basis of safety because we have advice that they are safe.

**Patrick Harvie:** I do not intend to stray into the issue of carcinogens and the other controversies that surround some of those substances. However, given that the health effects of drinks containing additives provide sufficient reason to remove such drinks from schools, why should foods containing such additives—not necessarily the same additives as in drinks—not be removed for the same reason?

Also, do other issues such as freshness and preparation not have an impact? Obviously, the nutrient levels of what is eaten will vary widely based on all those different factors.

**Dr Higginson:** Let me try to address those different points.

On the issue of additives and artificial flavourings in drinks that have an acidic effect, I believe—I am a registered public health nutritionist rather than a dental expert—that the fact that the carrier is a fluid means that the acid is given a lot of exposure to the teeth, especially if the person sips slowly from the drink over a period of time. That is likely to have a much more erosive impact on the teeth than some additives in food. I am not entirely familiar with the detail of how the acid content of food affects teeth, but I could seek further clarity on that if that would be helpful.

The issue of freshness is, I think, a slightly different argument. I know that, in its previous discussions on the bill, the committee has heard that moving food from a central production unit to an individual school results in some loss of nutrients. The most obvious example is vitamin C—which is a very labile vitamin—because it starts to be lost as soon as, for example, an apple or orange is cut or a potato is cooked. Inevitably, the nutrient content and overall quality of the food will be affected if it is brought from a central production unit to an individual school. Such movement will have a deleterious effect to varying degrees on the different nutrients in the food. As I said, vitamin C is the most obvious example of that.

However, even if we take those sorts of things into account, the standards that we have set will be perfectly achievable if schools plan their menus carefully and do as much as they can to minimise the travel times between the production and consumption of the food.

**Patrick Harvie:** I might want to explore those issues in future with other witnesses but, before I finish just now, I want to be clear that the working group had nothing to say about additives in food.

**Dr Higginson:** We have not said anything specific about additives in food.

**Patrick Harvie:** Given that some of the working group's standards are less stringent than those that are in the "Hungry for Success" guidance, what is the health impact likely to be from putting them into statute?

10:00

**Dr Higginson:** Although the standards are less stringent, the committee should not take that to mean that the standards that will be achieved will be any different from those that have been achieved under the "Hungry for Success" guidance. Evidence that was provided to us in our discussions with HMIE showed that most schools are not getting anywhere near the 33 per cent standard on sodium intake recommended in "Hungry for Success". I do not remember the exact figures but I think that figures of about 48 per cent were quoted. Many schools still have a long way to go.

However, some schools are meeting the standard. We applaud them and would not want them to move back from that position, but we recognise that, for many schools, the sodium standard is challenging and it will take time for them to reformulate the bought-in product and for best practice to be shared among schools in order to bring the sodium levels down. That is why we have recommended phasing.

We believe that the health benefits of the measures will be huge. The committee may find it helpful if I set out the reasons for that by talking about the benefits of a healthy diet for young people and adults in Scotland and describing the diseases for which diet is a risk factor. Obviously, we hope that the measures that we are discussing will have an impact on them. Also, the committee may find it useful if I spend a little time explaining just how bad some children's diets can be.

It is increasingly recognised that adopting an unhealthy lifestyle early in life, including poor dietary habits, being inactive and so on, sets habits that can later contribute to the development of overweight and obesity and Scotland's three biggest killers: coronary heart disease; various cancers; and stroke. Overweight and obesity are increasing at alarming rates in our children and raise the risk of individuals developing type 2 diabetes, the incidence of which among children is also going through the roof.

As the committee will know, there is already a big problem with overweight and obesity among Scotland's children. The 2003 Scottish health survey, which gives us our most recent data, shows that 35 per cent of boys between two and 15 are overweight or obese, as are 30 per cent of girls. This is a big problem. Their diets are not good at all. The target for fruit and vegetables is that people should eat at least five portions a day. On average, however, Scottish children in that age group eat just over two and a half portions a day. As children get older, their fruit and vegetables consumption falls still lower, so we really need to help them. The majority—six out of 10—consume sweets and chocolates at least once a day and many of them eat sweets and chocolates more often than that. Four out of 10 children consume sugary soft drinks once a day or more and a quarter drink them twice a day or more—that is perhaps three or four cans a day.

We do not rank well in international tables of sugary soft drinks consumption, as members can imagine. The recent survey of the health behaviours of school-age children, which was sponsored by the World Health Organisation, reported that Scottish children have the second highest rate of consumption of soft drinks across the 35 participating countries. We were second only to Israel, and it is a lot hotter in Israel, so there is a better reason for drinking cold, sugary drinks there.

The dental health argument is important as well. The Scottish Executive's 2002 consultation on oral health, "Towards Better Oral Health in Children" showed us that, by the age of five, 55 per cent of children in Scotland have dental disease and that, by the age of 14, 68 per cent of them already have decay in their adult teeth.

We need to tackle those issues head on, and I hope that I have been able to demonstrate that there is a lot of room for improvement in our children's diets and that a healthy diet—and, therefore, the standards that we are discussing—has a huge role to play in improving children's health in Scotland.

**Patrick Harvie:** It might be helpful if we could get copies of the catering standards that were mentioned.

**Dr Higginson:** They are in development and we will provide them to you as soon as possible.

**The Convener:** Before I ask Tricia Marwick to ask a question, I should say that, although I appreciate that the panel members have been working on this area for some time and are enthusiastic and want to impart as much information as possible, it would be helpful if they could keep their answers as succinct as possible and try to give us only additional information that is not in the briefing. We have a number of other panels to hear from this morning.

**Tricia Marwick (Mid Scotland and Fife) (SNP):** Dr Higginson said that the target for salt was challenging, which is why the expert group has not accepted the recommendation in "Hungry for Success" and has set its own. Why is it challenging? Is it because there is a high salt content in the food that is being bought in?

**Heather Peace:** About 75 per cent of the salt in the UK diet comes from manufactured products. The Food Standards Agency has set a target to reduce the UK population's salt intake by 2010. The reason for that long timescale is that industry needs time to adjust or reformulate its products to reduce the salt content. Further, we are used to quite a high-salt diet. You need to bring people along with you to reduce the demand for salt. The agency is working hard on public information campaigns and with the industry to reduce the amount of salt in people's diets. We felt that we should take a similar approach to food in schools and should allow time for product reformulation.

**Tricia Marwick:** You expect that schools use manufactured products that have a high-salt content and you are allowing the industry time to adjust. Is that correct?

**Heather Peace:** Some schools use manufactured products. We have set specifications for manufactured products that will lower the fat and, in some cases, the sugar content. Those specifications are designed to help caterers to find products that will fit with the nutrient standards. Having done all of that, we feel that it is still quite a challenge to get down to the levels that are set out in "Hungry for Success". Although we would like to have set the specifications at those levels, we had to take on

board the experience of those who had been involved in the implementation of the hungry for success programme and had found it difficult. As we were moving from guidance, which is what "Hungry for Success" is, to statute, we felt that we could not set people up to fail.

**Dr Higginson:** I sense that Tricia Marwick is also asking about the extent to which we expect schools to rely on manufactured and bought-in products rather than food that they have cooked themselves. We do not want to drive schools towards being dependent on bought-in products. Our intention is quite the opposite—we want to encourage schools to cook their own fresh food and to do so on-site, if possible.

Earlier, I said that the phasing-in period was designed to allow schools to share best practice and develop their skills in cooking and providing lower-salt meals. The specifications that Heather Peace is referring to will be part of the picture of what is provided in schools, but by no means is the bought-in product the whole story. We hope that that will become an increasingly small part of the food that is served in schools.

**Tricia Marwick:** Is it proposed that there should be no salt on the table—not even Lo Salt? How can we encourage children to use and develop their sense of taste for themselves if we simply ban salt from the table?

**Dr Higginson:** I would argue that, in order to develop your sense of taste, you should have as little salt as possible in your diet. People who are used to eating a lot of salt and who then cut salt out of their diet or reduce their consumption of it considerably find that, initially, their food seems tasteless. However, then they realise that what they have been tasting all along has been salt and, as they get used to the lack of salt, they find that the natural flavour of the food becomes apparent.

As I have said, I work for NHS Health Scotland. In public health nutrition, we are always encouraging people not to add salt at the table. Our colleagues at the Food Standards Agency—indeed, everybody in public health nutrition—say the same thing, so it made no sense to make salt available to children in school.

Given that we are being more relaxed about the amount of salt that is in the school lunch, we need to be tighter about everything that wraps around lunch—that is, the food outwith lunch, over which we now have control through the standards. There is an opportunity to take salt out in that way.

**Tricia Marwick:** In effect, you are using the lack of salt at the table to compensate for the fact that the food manufacturing industry cannot get its act together to reduce salt in manufactured products.

**Dr Higginson:** We should not place all the blame at the industry's door, as it is also about what the school cooks are cooking. It is important to try to reduce salt levels wherever we can. To be fair to the manufacturers, we all eat the food that they produce and we do not want the salt levels to be reduced as fast as the theorists among us might like because the food would not taste good. Everybody's taste needs time to adapt to the changes. For a number of years, the Food Standards Agency has had a programme of work with the industry to reduce sodium levels for the wider population in products such as soups and sauces. The reduction has to be staged, because sales would fall significantly if the levels were reduced overnight. We are working in line with that wider premise.

**Heather Peace:** It is not such a radical step to take salt away from the table. Many schools are doing it now anyway.

**The Convener:** Mr Petrie, I am conscious that a number of the issues that you wanted to pursue have already been covered. Do you want to raise any additional points?

**Dave Petrie (Highlands and Islands) (Con):** Yes, I want to ask about the thorny issue of the uptake of school meals. The hungry for success programme has not been a resounding success in getting more kids to take school lunches. Did the expert working group take account of the potential for higher standards resulting in reduced uptake of school meals?

**Dr Higginson:** Yes. Uptake was a key consideration for the group, and I hope that what we have said has demonstrated the group's desire to be pragmatic in that respect. I also said that the standards that we propose for lunch are, in some cases, not as stringent as those in "Hungry for Success". The expert working group believes that its proposals will continue to raise the nutritional quality of lunch and are achievable—I have talked about achievability already. The group also believes that the meals will be tasty and appealing, which is the most important thing for keeping children in school eating lunch.

It is also fair to say that whether young people choose to eat school meals is dependent on more than simply the content of the school lunch, although that is obviously important. There is much evidence that the eating environment, the length of queues and how much of their lunch break young people have to spend in a queue waiting for lunch are also key considerations and challenges, as is the fact that some secondary school pupils just want to get out of school at lunch time, no matter what is provided there. They may buy something healthy outside school, but they need a break from the school environment, just as we often need to get out of work at lunch time.

We believe that we have the balance right. It will be challenging to raise standards, but it will be possible to do so with the right combination of leadership, expertise, training—which is important—and commitment.

This week, there has been some media coverage about what has been going on south of the border in response to the programme of school meals work there. I am aware of coverage pertaining to uptake. That may have caused members some concerns, but Scotland is doubly advantaged on the uptake of school meals. First, we have three years' experience of the implementation of the hungry for success programme and can learn from it. That is what we have endeavoured to do in putting together our proposals for regulation. We have tried to use those lessons to ensure that regulations drive up standards but are also realistic and achievable.

Secondly, as a result of the three years of implementation of the hungry for success programme that local authorities, children, parents and schools have experienced, they have already started to change, so we are not starting from the same place as England. We are not trying to be as strict and we are further forward as we start. The combination of those factors will help to cushion any effect that the further changes may have on uptake.

We acknowledge that there may be an initial drop in uptake, although that will probably happen in secondaries rather than primaries, because secondaries have not yet experienced so much of the hungry for success programme—it is not due for full implementation in secondaries until next month, whereas that happened in primaries two years ago. The group takes the view that the bill, as well as improving the food that our children eat, will be a significant step forward in improving the diet of Scotland as a whole. However, that will not change overnight—we will need to stick with it.

10:15

**Dave Petrie:** How have you taken into account the nutrient requirements of different age groups of children in your recommendations?

**Heather Peace:** The standards that the expert working group proposes are based on dietary reference values that were set by the Committee on Medical Aspects of Food and Nutrition Policy. Roughly speaking, dietary reference values are what we might think of as recommended daily amounts of food. The reference values for school-age children are banded into different age bands: four to six, seven to 10, 11 to 14, and 15 to 18. In setting the nutrient standards, we took on board the experiences of those who were involved in implementing the hungry for success programme

in primary schools. The two age bands that were used were thought to be impractical and there was a demand for a single nutrient standard for primary schools. We have therefore set the standard for primary schools at the seven to 10 band. However, we acknowledge that primary schools contain a wide range of individuals, from small children of four and five up to strapping 12-year-olds, with different requirements, appetites and rates of growth. It is critical that catering staff undergo sufficient training to be able to draw on their skills and knowledge to offer appropriately sized portions to meet individual children's needs.

**Dave Petrie:** So age is not the only criterion—physical development is taken into account.

**Heather Peace:** Many criteria determine an individual's requirement for nutrients, not just their age. Some children grow quickly and can be well developed by the age of 12, when they may almost have reached their adult height and weight. Obviously, we have not ignored that. We need catering staff to be well trained so that they realise that and are not too strict.

**Dave Petrie:** Is training catering staff a resource issue?

**Heather Peace:** Catering staff need to be trained in that respect. A lot of such training already happens under the hungry for success programme.

**Dr Higginson:** There has been a big programme of work to support and train caterers and it can be only good if that continues. However, the programme will need to be tweaked to help people to understand the new standards and how they differ from those in "Hungry for Success".

**Heather Peace:** With secondary schools, we have taken into account the age groups and weighted our average requirements in respect of the proportion of children in schools who are in the different age bands. The requirements reflect the school population.

**John Home Robertson:** Will you say a quick word about children with special dietary needs and those with cultural or religious requirements?

**Dr Higginson:** Equality of access to school lunches for children with cultural, ethnic or religious requirements is an underpinning principle of the standards, as we set out at the beginning. In essence, food that is provided for those pupils will need to meet the standards, but it will need to be culturally appropriate, too. That is already happening in schools—they are mindful of that. The standards will still apply and we consider it perfectly possible to meet them.

Medically prescribed diets and dietary requirements are excepted from the standards. As the committee is aware, other exceptions exist,

such as food for school trips, sports days, discos and cultural events.

**Scott Barrie (Dunfermline West) (Lab):** Will you expand on how your recommendations differ from what is happening south of the border, not just because we have had the three-year hungry for success lead-in? Dave Petrie asked how we ensure that we increase uptake of school meals. Are there any salient differences in the English approach from the one that we are taking?

**Dr Higginson:** Yes. I will outline briefly some of the key differences. The sodium target that we recommend is less challenging than in England. We are phasing it in, whereas England has gone for 30 per cent of the target that was set by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition. We have not gone for that in Scotland—33 per cent was the level set in “Hungry for Success”, and we found it difficult to achieve. We feel that it might be challenging for England to achieve that target.

Another difference is that we are not attempting to boost the vitamin and mineral content of the lunch so that its contribution to overall daily needs is disproportionately more than the calories and energy that it provides. England has adopted the view that schools should take the opportunity that a school lunch provides to get healthy food into children for whom lunch might be the only meal of the day and therefore to boost the vitamin C and iron content. There is some evidence to show that there are deficiencies in certain nutrients in the population. However, in line with our overall pragmatic view, although it is possible to boost vitamin C content, or provide more vitamin C, we will be giving children much more than a third of the target anyway. We took the view that such an approach might act as a further constraint to supplying tasty and appealing foods and that we needed to address those deficiencies in the population in ways other than through the school lunch.

There are three key differences between what we propose for food and drinks and what happens in England. We will phase out artificially sweetened soft drinks, including flavoured waters, whereas they have been taken out straightaway in England, where no adjustment period has been allowed for.

In Scotland, fried foods at lunch are allowed once more a week than in England. We have tried to be pragmatic in that respect as well. We were given lots of feedback around the table that Friday fish and chips is a really big cultural thing in Scottish schools and to help both with uptake and to meet that cultural demand, we opted to allow fried foods such as chips on one other occasion in the week apart from Friday. We have said that chips must be provided as part of a meal to try to get rid of the culture of chips and curry sauce or chips and cheese.

We are trying to be pragmatic and realistic, although nutrient standards must be achieved. If schools want to serve fish and chips but find that, in trying to meet the nutrient standard for fat, serving deep-fried chips on another occasion will shoot their total fat content too high, they will not be able to serve them unless they take fat out of something else on their menu. When schools plan their menus, there is always the cushion of the nutrient standards to think about.

The other key difference is that, outwith lunch, the only bagged savoury snacks allowed in English schools are nuts and seeds with no added fat, salt or sugar, such as a little bag of cashew nuts. We did not think that that would be very popular in Scotland. Again, we wanted to pull crisps and other bagged savoury snacks out of the diet as much as possible while still allowing for some variety. We opted to allow small bags of savoury snacks that meet the target nutrient specifications that Heather Peace spoke about, but outwith lunch only because such snacks have no place in lunch. The salt content of the recommended snacks is low so we felt that a small bag would be acceptable. Perhaps Heather Peace will say more about that.

**Heather Peace:** No, that is clear.

**Dr Higginson:** There are just two brands on the market at the moment.

**Heather Peace:** It is true that there are not many products and that there may be a gap in the market to be filled. That is a challenge for crisp and snack manufacturers.

**Dr Higginson:** Seeds and nuts with no added salt, sugar or fat are allowed, too, if people want them.

**The Convener:** Thank you very much for your comprehensive answers to the committee's questions. Once you have reflected on the evidence that you have given us, if you feel that there are any points that you did not raise with us, we would be happy to hear from you in writing.

I suspend the meeting briefly to allow for a changeover of witnesses.

10:25

*Meeting suspended.*

10:28

*On resuming—*

**The Convener:** I welcome the members of the second panel. We have been joined by Gaynor Bussell of the Scottish Food and Drink Federation, Len Braid of the Automatic Vending Association

and Jill Ardagh of the British Soft Drinks Association. Thank you for coming.

Do you feel that the Executive consulted effectively on the bill and that you were given appropriate opportunities to participate in the consultation?

**Gaynor Bussell (Scottish Food and Drink Federation):** We do not have a real issue with the consultation, although we were told the nutrient standards quite late on, which meant that there was not much time to consider them and to make judgments on them. We also wondered whether more time could have been spent doing risk impacts and reflecting on what has happened in England. Those are my only comments for now.

**Jill Ardagh (British Soft Drinks Association):** We feel that the consultation is just beginning, because without the recommendations from the expert working group, we do not know the detail. The devil is in the detail. We welcome the opportunity to comment on the proposals and we hope that the Executive will open up the expert working group's document for consultation. We have received it from the Parliament, but we have not heard from the Executive. It is not clear to us to whom we should respond or even whether there is an opportunity to respond on the detail of the expert working group's proposals. In the future, we hope that consultation will be maintained on the draft regulations that will implement the standards. We do not know what the procedures will be, but we hope that the industry can be involved.

10:30

**Len Braid (Automatic Vending Association):** I back up the point about the nutritional criteria—it would have been more helpful to have received them sooner.

**The Convener:** Will putting the nutritional standards on a statutory basis bring any benefits?

**Jill Ardagh:** It is very much for the regulator to decide on the method of introducing the standards. As you will have gathered, our interest is in the detail of the standards and in ensuring that the standards are workable and can achieve the desired objectives.

**Gaynor Bussell:** I back Jill Ardagh on that.

**Len Braid:** I agree.

**The Convener:** We have already heard that the nutritional standards are to be extended from the food that is consumed at lunch time to all food and drink that is served in schools. What is your view on that? In particular, how do you think it will affect the provision of food in vending machines?

**Len Braid:** If children are given a balanced choice and lead active lives, I do not think that

there is anything wrong with their having a packet of crisps or a soft drink from time to time.

**Gaynor Bussell:** We discussed the issue as part of the consultations that were held in England and Wales. Members of the Scottish Food and Drink Federation and the English Food and Drink Federation agreed that some protection should be afforded in schools. After all, parents at home would not tell their kids where the crisp and chocolate drawers were and invite them to help themselves whenever they wanted. That is why we came up with our target nutrient specifications based on guideline daily amounts, on which the committee has been provided with details. I would be happy to elaborate on the specifications, which do not ban any particular category of food. They simply help children to learn how certain foods can fit into a balanced diet. Schools should be providing such information.

**Jill Ardagh:** We definitely support the improvement of nutritional standards in schools. The industry is developing a wide range of products that it believes can meet the targets of reducing sugar intake and tackling obesity. We would like to discuss the standards further to ensure that the right products can be provided.

What concerns us about the nutritional standards is the fact that they contain no reference to fluid intake. Given that hydration is a prime function of a drink, the association regrets that the nutritional standards in England, Wales and Scotland do not mention targets for fluid intake during the school day. Sodexho, which is a food services supplier, did a survey in schools that revealed an average fluid intake of only about 350ml over a seven-hour day. The target is 1.5 to 2 litres in a school day, so there is obviously a deficit. We urge that children are encouraged to drink enough during the school day.

**The Convener:** Children should obviously be encouraged to drink throughout the school day. The question is what they should drink. If they were to drink 2 litres of a fizzy drink, that might be a little excessive. There needs to be a balance.

**Jill Ardagh:** Absolutely—hence the need for standards. We do not dispute the need for standards but, within those standards, children should be provided with a choice of suitable drinks that meet the targets that the Government is setting.

**The Convener:** The previous panel suggested that the bill gives the food and drink industry an opportunity to pick up on something that is not done at present—the provision of healthy snacks that meet the nutritional requirements. Do you agree that there is an opportunity to give children the choice of having healthy and nutritional snacks that will safeguard their future health?

**Jill Ardagh:** The drinks industry has developed a range of juice drinks—effectively, they mix water and juice—but we also need to talk about preservatives. Obviously, if we package a drink, it has to be preserved. It is not clear to us yet whether the standards will permit that. In England, we are discussing the role of preservatives with the School Food Trust.

There is also the matter of natural flavours and added sweeteners—the intense sweeteners that were mentioned during the previous evidence-taking session. We are looking for a good method of adding sweetness without also adding calories or sugar, which the Executive and the Parliament wish to see reduced. Provided there is flexibility in the standards, the drinks industry believes that it can provide an acceptable range of drinks.

**Gaynor Bussell:** The food industry is happy to find ways in which to innovate and to be driven to innovate. We are constantly looking at our products to see how we do things such as gradually reduce the level of salt—and now fat and sugar levels. Any initiative that helps to drive the industry towards innovation is a good thing. If standards are set for snacks, that is fine.

We do not want to see standards that exclude great big chunks of the food industry; we want children to have the opportunity to snack on a wide range of products, all of which will come within certain healthy parameters. As I said, that is why we developed our TNS GDA scheme.

**Len Braid:** The vending industry in Scotland has not offered carbonated sugared drinks in secondary schools for a year now. To be honest, there has not been much effect in terms of the children. The drinks industry has been ready to supply, but it is very difficult to find healthier products on the food side. The manufacturers are not there yet—they are not up to speed. As the committee heard earlier, at the moment, the vending industry can offer only two types of snack that meet the healthier snack criteria. It will be quite a while before any of the manufacturers get up to speed in offering healthy products that children want to buy.

**Gaynor Bussell:** Children also need to accept the change; we should move them along gradually. The change also needs to be doable by the industry: companies need to feel that there is a market for their healthy products, once they have developed suitable options. There are lots of drivers on both sides.

**The Convener:** Finally, do you accept the argument that the Executive and members of the expert working group are putting forward in promoting the bill—that the proposal will not prevent Scotland's young people from eating certain foods? The point that is being made in

introducing the bill is that, while they are at school, children will not have such easy access to certain foods.

I have an anecdote that illustrates the point. Last week, I went to one of the primary schools in my constituency for school lunch. On Monday evening, I was sitting in my constituency office, when some of the children with whom I had had lunch passed by the office. They saw me at the window and decided to come in. It turned out that they were on the way to the chip shop to get their dinner. I told them that that was not a very healthy thing to do, but they said, "We do not get chips at school any longer, so this is when we have to have them." The reality is that children will always be able to make such choices as long as their parents allow them to do so. Nevertheless, we have a responsibility to ensure that there is a balance and the bill is an attempt to deliver that balance.

**Len Braid:** As you said, we do not want to move the problem to the corner shop or local supermarket. The industry tries to offer two types of vending machine. Alongside a machine that sells regular confectionery and crisps there might be a healthy-options machine that sells products that are deemed to be healthy. However, take-up on a healthy-options machine is, on average, five times lower than take-up on a conventional vending machine.

**Jill Ardagh:** The convener talked about children who go outside school to buy food and drink because they cannot find what they want in school. The food industry would like to work with schools to help change children's tastes and choices, so that children choose what is available in school instead of buying something that is deemed to be less healthy from the corner shop, where the range of products is restricted.

**Gaynor Bussell:** The proposals in Scotland are a little more pragmatic than the approach in England, which is good. The Scottish approach offers more scope for doing things gradually—gradual is the name of the game. If primary school age children start to learn about healthy eating, healthy eating habits are more likely to stick when they reach secondary school age.

The convener is right to say that much wider issues are at stake, which is why it is important to adopt a whole-school approach. We should ensure that there is no sudden strict enforcement of what can be eaten at lunch time and that children learn about healthy eating and cooking properly. There should be a wider education initiative that includes parents. Healthy eating must start somewhere and the whole family—parents and grandparents—should get involved. How babies are weaned is important, too. It is a big story.

**Tricia Marwick:** Can the witness from the Automatic Vending Association tell us the value to its members of the vending machine industry in schools in Scotland or in the UK?

**Len Braid:** There is a £1.5 billion refreshment industry in the UK. Probably about 80 per cent of vending machines are in workplaces and 20 per cent are in leisure facilities, schools and colleges.

**Tricia Marwick:** Did you say that the UK-wide figure for the value of vending machines is probably 20 per cent of £1.5 billion?

**Len Braid:** Yes.

**John Home Robertson:** We have let the cat out of the bag. The bill is intended to provide for health-promoting schools, but the imposition of controls over what is available in schools will not achieve much if kids can just go along the street and buy what they want—the convener described how that happens in Airdrie. Should we amend the bill to extend controls to outlets outside schools?

**Len Braid:** Such as corner shops and supermarkets?

**John Home Robertson:** Yes.

**Len Braid:** I do not know whether you could do that.

**John Home Robertson:** I do not know, either, but kids simply go out of school and buy unhealthy stuff. Are we wasting our time on the bill? Do we need to do something else?

**Len Braid:** You are not wasting your time. Children must be educated about healthy eating from primary school age onwards. To be honest, we have lost a generation—

**John Home Robertson:** Do you guys make more profit from what you sell in corner shops than from what you sell in schools?

**Len Braid:** I do not have a corner shop—

**John Home Robertson:** Sorry, I meant the industry.

**Gaynor Bussell:** We should not assume that all the products that are sold outside schools are unhealthy or that there is no role for them in the diet. I am a mother and I have sent my kids to school with a Penguin biscuit and a sandwich and some fruit. If such products are suddenly not allowed in the lunch box, children might look for them elsewhere, but access to those products does not necessarily mean that the children have an unhealthy diet. Vending machines can provide all sorts of so-called healthy products.

10:45

**Len Braid:** A vending machine cannot differentiate between something that is healthy and something that is classed as unhealthy.

**John Home Robertson:** But you can differentiate when you choose what to put in it.

**Len Braid:** Yes.

**Jill Ardagh:** There can be too much focus on individual foods or drinks when we should be considering diet as a whole. The important thing is that children's overall diets improve and are balanced. Children should be taught how to construct a balanced diet. Rather than pointing at individual foods and saying, "That's good, and that's bad," we should be taking an overall approach to diets. We hope that children will learn about that in school.

**Patrick Harvie:** Earlier, Mr Braid described a young person having a fizzy drink and a bag of crisps and said that it would not do much harm as long as it happened only once in a while and the young person had a balanced diet and an active lifestyle. Does the panel agree that that is not an accurate description of what happens, but is an aspiration? Far too often, such a meal is breakfast for children in Scotland. We have a big problem and we have to change things.

**Jill Ardagh:** It sounds like an educational problem. We have to teach children about what constitutes a proper breakfast, a balanced diet, or a snack that should be occasional and just part of that balanced diet.

**Patrick Harvie:** That balanced diet is not being achieved; too many of certain products are being eaten too often.

**Jill Ardagh:** That is the rationale for your approach.

The average overall figures are very reasonable, although some consumers will eat an excessive amount of one particular type of foodstuff. That has to be addressed, and such people's diets could be targeted, but the crux of the matter is education.

**Gaynor Bussell:** Dietary surveys show that even if a person eats excessive amounts of any one product—even biscuits, cakes or confectionery—you cannot necessarily predict that they will become obese. It is often the opposite: quite a few people who eat a lot of such foods are actually less obese. However, the story can be complicated, and those people may be more physically active.

**Patrick Harvie:** I hope that you are not suggesting that that breakfast was a healthy breakfast.

**Gaynor Bussell:** No, no, no. I am not saying that.

**Patrick Harvie:** I ask only because there is a danger of perceived complacency if we even suggest that there is not a problem.

**Len Braid:** I agree. I have seen children having a packet of crisps and a can of fizzy juice for breakfast. Speaking from the point of view of someone in the vending industry, I can say only that all the machines that I have in schools are on timers. They can vend only at break times.

**Patrick Harvie:** What are your views on the expert working group's recommendations on the type of drinks that should be permitted in schools?

**Jill Ardagh:** We are alarmed that soft drinks are being associated with health risks, and we would obviously seek clarification on what is meant by that. Perhaps the wording could be looked at. After all, it is not legal to sell products that could be injurious to health.

**Patrick Harvie:** Yes it is.

**Jill Ardagh:** Not under food hygiene law. It is illegal to sell foods that are injurious to health.

**Patrick Harvie:** It depends on how much is consumed.

**Jill Ardagh:** Exactly. That is the issue. One soft drink does not constitute a health risk—which takes us back to diets and how they are composed. We are concerned at the way in which soft drinks are being presented.

We would like more clarity on what is and is not permitted. South of the border, there have been mixtures of juice and plain water, and we do not know whether any other ingredients will be permitted—

**Patrick Harvie:** Such as?

**Jill Ardagh:** Such as preservatives—which will be packaged if my members are supplying it—and perhaps some natural flavours. When fruit juice is diluted, that obviously affects the taste. Adding some natural flavour from fruit can enhance the product and make it tastier and more enjoyable for children.

The expert working group's proposals mention

"Artificially sweetened drinks ... with a nil sugar content".

Does that mean that an artificially sweetened drink that contains a little fruit juice is not permitted, or does "nil sugar" mean no added sugar? We have a lot of questions to ask.

**Patrick Harvie:** Do you accept in principle the proposal to remove artificial sweeteners, which is what we are talking about? How do you respond to the previous panel's comments on the impact on dental health?

**Jill Ardagh:** We are looking for consistency in the standards. The Executive has decided to phase out so-called artificially sweetened drinks, but producers will still be permitted to add artificial sweeteners to milk drinks or drinking yoghurt. Artificial sweeteners will be allowed in drinks but not in still or carbonated non-dairy drinks.

**Patrick Harvie:** So you agree that if there is a case for removing artificial sweeteners from liquid drinks, the same case exists for removing them from yoghurts?

**Jill Ardagh:** We seek consistency and we want to get to the bottom of the issue. Dental erosion was mentioned earlier. As is obvious, good oral hygiene is important to protect children's teeth, but using a straw, for example, can help to avoid contact with the teeth if that is an issue. We suggested that idea in Wales and the chief dental officer there was receptive to it.

**Patrick Harvie:** So there should be drinks that are permitted to be drunk only through a straw.

**Jill Ardagh:** Drinks can be supplied with straws if that is an issue. The industry is keen to work with you to address the concerns that have been raised.

**Gaynor Bussell:** The point about straws is a genuine one. I have heard it from dentists as well. The problem is the acidity of the fruit juice or the canned drink. If it is drunk through a straw, it is removed from the teeth and sent to the back of the throat.

**Patrick Harvie:** What would be the impact on the drinks industry if the drinks that may be provided in schools were restricted as the expert group proposes?

**Jill Ardagh:** As I said, we have some outstanding questions, particularly about whether anything can be added to juice drinks, such as a preservative. If that is not permitted, there will be a big impact on the industry and a reduction in drinks in schools. Also, people who cannot supply drinks with the new specification will lose out. Heat treatment is one way to preserve drinks, but it is expensive. We are talking to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs about that. If the industry moves to use heat treatment to preserve products, there will be a climate change impact and the industry will miss its energy reduction targets.

**Patrick Harvie:** The BSDA submission states:

"Drinks perform an important hydrating function".

Do you agree that water from the tap performs the same function? People do not need to drink your products.

**Jill Ardagh:** Certainly. Some of our members bottle water. For example, Strathmore Ltd is a

respected member of the BSDA. The question is whether children drink enough if only water is on offer. Research shows that offering a choice of drinks encourages children to drink more. If they drink only water, it is a question of measuring how much they drink and assessing whether they achieve adequate levels of hydration.

**Patrick Harvie:** Do you have any general comments on the recommended nutritional standards?

**Gaynor Bussell:** We agree that the standards could be met and that they have a good nutritional basis. We felt the same in England. The Caroline Walker Trust guideline that 30 per cent of pupils' daily requirements should be provided by school lunches seems reasonable. As I say, we have tried to fit that in with saying that snacks should perhaps provide 10 per cent of the total daily intake. That is what we came up with in our scheme. We are happy with the nutrient standards as they stand. Scotland has been a little bit more pragmatic. In England, the level of 40 per cent has been suggested for micronutrients. I was on the school meal review panel and it was very difficult to plan a diet that provided that much—30 per cent is a little bit more reasonable.

**Patrick Harvie:** Do you think that the Scottish Food and Drink Federation's members would be equally happy and would be able to meet nutritional standards if they included considerations such as freshness and the impact on nutritional values of processed food as opposed to fresh food?

**Gaynor Bussell:** If you meet the standards, you meet the standards. Freshness will be included because people will want to include some fresh fruit and vegetables in the meals. To be honest, we do not have a particular view on whether the food has to be fresh or not. We would just provide foods that would help to meet the standards. Freshness is a side issue.

**Cathie Craigie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (Lab):** We heard from Mr Braid that the vending machine operators can set machines on a timer. We are agreed that the supplier will decide what is in the vending machine—whether it is healthy and nutritious or rubbish and sugary.

The SFDF's submission says that young people look for snacks during the day and that you want to talk about setting guideline daily amounts within those snacks. How can everyone get together? If such snacks are what young people want—even in our earlier evidence session there was recognition that, particularly in secondary schools, young people look for a snack mid-morning or later on in the day outwith lunch times—how can the industry get together to provide nutritious snacks from a vending machine?

**Len Braid:** You said that suppliers decide what is in the vending machines. I do not dictate what goes into the vending machines in any of the schools in which we operate; I do not think that any vending company does that. We have regular meetings with parents, teachers and schoolchildren. We consult schoolchildren, probably three times a year, on what they would like to see in their vending machines. We have kept them well informed of the changes that will happen and which have happened over the past year in relation to soft drinks. We told them that they would no longer be able to buy carbonated sugared drinks from the vending machines and that we would slowly replace such drinks with products that fall within the guidelines. They welcomed that whole-heartedly.

**Cathie Craigie:** In response to a previous question, you mentioned that you had difficulty in getting savoury snacks.

**Len Braid:** Yes.

**Cathie Craigie:** I am trying to make the point that the vending machines can churn out whatever you put into them. A machine could contain healthy products, but you are having difficulty in getting suitable savoury snacks. How is the Scottish Food and Drink Federation responding to that? There is a call from politicians and parents for the challenges that lie ahead to be met in respect of the health of our children and the health of the nation. How will you respond to that? The changes will happen. Either you will be left behind or you will respond, so that Len Braid and the members of the Automatic Vending Association can continue in business.

11:00

**Gaynor Bussell:** At the FDF, all our members were round the table and we all signed up to the scheme that we had decided on. That includes the big members, such as Nestlé and Cadbury, and the little members. The scheme would set a limit of 10 per cent of the total daily intake for calories and other nutrients of concern such as salt, sugars and saturated fat.

When we tested more than 100 products, we found that 47 per cent of them met the standards across the range. We also tested by portion size, so a large flapjack might fail the test whereas a finger-sized flapjack would pass. We looked at products that were already available and which could be extended with innovation. It might be difficult to reduce the fat in a bar of chocolate because chocolate has to contain a certain amount of fat, but it could be sold in smaller, thinner bars or fun-sized bars—or not-so-fun-sized bars, as the children call them. A reduction can be made by changing portion size—that is being

talked about a lot at the moment—or by reducing the level of the nutrients of concern.

That was our proposal to the School Food Trust. The scheme was rejected because it was thought that it would be too difficult to implement, but it still exists. There has been much confusion about what is and is not allowed in vending in schools. I do not think that our scheme would be any more confusing than that.

**Cathie Craigie:** You are saying that a scheme exists, but that no one will go with it unless Government agrees to it.

**Gaynor Bussell:** The scheme is similar to the FSA target nutrient specifications, but we based it on portion size because children eat portions of food. We are saying that we would provide food and that there could be an accreditation scheme under which we would guarantee that those snacks would not surpass the 10 per cent figure for all the nutrients of concern. When children went to their vending machine or tuck shop, they would get only portions that met that limit for fat, sugar and salt. For example, in a school for 11 to 18-year-olds, the limit for a snack would be 223 calories and 0.6g of salt; those are the levels that we are talking about.

**Cathie Craigie:** In my earlier question, I was trying to get at how the industry is responding to the coming change, but you are not responding to it. Len Braid told us that he cannot get healthy snacks to fill his vending machines with. I might be being a bit slow on the uptake here, but—

**Gaynor Bussell:** Ours is a suggested scheme that we thought would fit—

**Cathie Craigie:** You say that it is a suggested scheme and that, if the Government does not agree to it, you will not go ahead with it. Surely it is up to the industry to respond to demand. There will be no demand for sugary, high-fat snacks; there will be a demand for healthier snacks.

**Gaynor Bussell:** But almost 50 per cent of the snacks that we have suggested fit into the scheme that we have devised. I am not sure that so many of our products would fit into the target nutrient specifications that the FSA has provided. Of course we will try and innovate to make the products fit but, at the moment, there is quite a bit of work to do, particularly with the savoury snacks, to bring down the levels of salt and fat to the targets. We are offering a scheme that does not ban any particular category such as cereal bars or chocolate, but which allows children to see how those things can fit into a broader, more balanced diet.

**Jill Ardagh:** On the side of innovation, I can see how my industry is trying to meet the new standards. Changing a product or recipe, or the

way in which something is manufactured, is sometimes a big financial commitment. The industry needs to be clear on what the standards are first, but they are in draft form. The industry wants to show that it is willing to adjust, but it cannot start producing to the standards until it is sure what they are. My members have tried hard to take sugar out of products and invest in new developments, but the standards get tighter and tighter all the time, so some of the new products might not be acceptable in schools. What are they to do?

**Cathie Craigie:** That lets me move on nicely to a point that the Scottish Food and Drink Federation makes in its submission. It states:

“the costs associated with product reformulation to comply with new ‘nutritional requirements’ can be significant.”

Will you expand on that comment?

**Gaynor Bussell:** We have had estimates of £35,000 to £250,000 for product reformulation, depending on the number of parameters that have to be reformulated. Salt is one but, if sugars and calories have to be reformulated as well, the cost increases. There is often a sugar-fat seesaw: if we reduce sugar levels, we sometimes fat up and the other way round. The product has to be bulked with something and it is a difficult matter.

With regard to product testing, a special group considered what would happen if fat and sugar levels in foods, not only salt levels, were reduced. The FSA has advised us that we will have to do microbial testing on all the products that we have developed because we often have to up the water level, as we have to substitute the food elements with water, which evokes microbial growth. The microbial growth tests will be expensive.

All sorts of things go into the figure. The costs are quite large.

**Jill Ardagh:** Another example is that, if preservatives are not permitted in juice drinks in school, a company that produces such drinks will have to buy the kit to heat treat them, which will cost more than £1 million. As you can understand, that is a significant investment.

**Tricia Marwick:** I do not want to be rude but, from some of the comments that I have heard, it seems that you feel like King Canute trying to hold back the tide. The reality is that the nutritional standards are coming, but you seem to be in denial that they might. You are still trying to influence Government with ideas like smaller portions of confectionery and chocolate biscuits, or by suggesting that the solution might be to use a straw to drink sugary drinks, rather than addressing the fundamental questions that we are trying to address.

I appreciate that the expert working group's proposals reached you late, but I and the rest of the committee seek your active engagement with the process. You have a huge, billion-pound industry and, if you do not take steps to comply with the nutritional standards that are being set down, you will lose a large part of it. However, I hear nothing to suggest that you embrace that point.

**Gaynor Bussell:** We are innovating hugely. Our members rose to the target nutrient specifications in "Hungry for Success". A lot of reformulation is going on. We are not trying to say that we will not engage, because we clearly are engaging. We are trying to think outside the box and offer some other pragmatic ideas for what could be done in schools. We are prepared to engage as far as we can, and I hope that that is happening even as we speak.

**Dave Petrie:** On the subject of thinking outside the box, have you investigated the costing and compliance of fair trade products?

**Gaynor Bussell:** No, but I can find out about that for you.

**Len Braid:** We offer fair trade products in all our machines in schools. They come with an extra premium, but we have found that children are prepared to pay that premium.

**Dave Petrie:** Is the premium significant?

**Len Braid:** The products are 10 or 15 per cent dearer.

**Dave Petrie:** I understood that that was improving.

**Len Braid:** It has improved, yes.

**The Convener:** That is interesting Mr Petrie, although I am not sure that that line of questioning is relevant to the bill.

**Cathie Craigie:** First, Trish Marwick made a point about straws. I understood that, whether children were drinking natural fruit juice or fizzy drinks, it was beneficial for them to use straws. What have you been doing in that area?

Secondly, how confident can education authorities be that suppliers of food and drinks to schools will meet and maintain the required nutritional standards?

**Jill Ardagh:** Your first point goes back to the dental issue. The main reason for wanting to phase out soft drinks in schools is dental erosion. That is an acid issue. Obviously, a lot of food and drink contains acid, so it is not just drinks that have erosive potential. We are not in denial. The issue has been raised, so we are looking for a solution to it. We have good dental advice that straws can be helpful. If straws are the solution—it

is not unusual to drink through a straw—we would promote that solution.

**Len Braid:** On your second point, as an industry, through time we will be able to meet the standards and offer a range. I do not know how long that will take, and there are still too many grey areas on what can and cannot be sold in vending machines. Gaynor Bussell mentioned portion control. I cannot sell a standard 50g bar of chocolate in a machine but I can sell one that weighs 15g. What is to stop a child buying five of those bars? Those issues have to be sorted out.

**Gaynor Bussell:** On the dental issue, some of our members already sell cartons of drinks that have little straws attached. I am a dietician by profession and I understand that the issue is the contact, and the length of contact, of the acid with the tooth. If someone drinks quite rapidly through a straw, that is a solution.

You asked whether we are confident that we will meet the standards. We are doing our best, but at the end of the day there have to be sales. It is hard for small and medium-sized businesses to make a line of products that is just for schools and nowhere else. There is an opportunity there, however. If products that are made for schools are accepted and are really nice, we can expand their marketing elsewhere. We need to consider ways in which industry, as well as schoolchildren, can win. Hopefully, that is the future for us.

**Dave Petrie:** I want to touch on something that was mentioned by the Automatic Vending Association. Are you aware of any examples of schools having introduced healthier options in their vending machines? If so, what have been the benefits or otherwise of such changes?

**Len Braid:** We deal with a number of schools that have introduced healthy option or perceived healthy option machines. The sales through those machines have fallen drastically.

11:15

**Dave Petrie:** Is that where pupils have had the option of one machine offering Coke and another one offering healthy options?

**Len Braid:** No, we deal with some schools in which only healthy options are available—either no chocolate is available or, if it is, it is fair trade. Sales are minimal. Pupils vote with their feet and go to the corner shop, ice cream van or burger van to buy a Mars bar.

**Dave Petrie:** How recently has that been happening?

**Len Braid:** Yesterday.

**Dave Petrie:** So that is the current situation.

**Len Braid:** Yes.

**Dave Petrie:** Have you any comment to make about the potential impact on revenue to schools from changes to food that is provided in vending machines?

**Len Braid:** There would be a big impact on revenue to schools, which would probably be down by about three quarters on current revenue.

**Patrick Harvie:** You mentioned healthy options and perceived healthy options. I am not clear about the meaning: were you describing two different categories?

**Len Braid:** No, but a lot of headmasters and rectors seem to think that a product is healthy just because it is not chocolate or wrapped with chocolate. That is not the case.

**Patrick Harvie:** What kind of products are we talking about?

**Len Braid:** We are talking about Nutri-Grain bars, other cereal bars, and things like that, which have high salt and sugar content.

**Tricia Marwick:** Is it possible for more rigorous nutritional requirements for school lunches to go hand in hand with increased uptake, or are they mutually incompatible?

**Gaynor Bussell:** There is a real possibility that the two can go hand in hand, but it depends on how changes are made. Gradual step changes will be helpful, as will considering the wider situation of a child's life rather than just giving them a lunch and expecting them to eat it.

It is a question of getting children on board as Jamie Oliver did—dare I mention his name?—perhaps by getting them to cook meals to see what goes in them, offering taste sessions, or taking them to see how food is grown. I am thinking about wider ways of influencing children to eat certain foods. You will also have to try somehow to influence the parents. Perhaps the child could do that by saying, “We had this thing at school—could we try it at home?” It is important to think wider than just the school meal. Change will take time.

We could offer children healthier versions of foods that they are familiar with. That could be a pizza that is made on the premises using healthier ingredients—wholegrain or wholemeal cereal to make the pizza dough, for example—or burgers with chips that are only 5 per cent fat. I know that those chips are counted as deep fried, but they almost come out green under the traffic-light scheme. Those meals would be familiar to children, and they should not be banned just because they are deemed to be junk food. They can be made healthier, with less fat and salt for example.

**The Convener:** That concludes the committee's questions to the panel. Thank you for your attendance. If there are points that you believe have not been covered this morning, the committee would be delighted to hear from you in writing and would give those points due consideration.

11:19

*Meeting suspended.*

11:29

*On resuming—*

**The Convener:** I welcome our third and final panel of witnesses. We are joined by Audrey Birt of Diabetes UK, David McCall of the British Dental Association, Mary Allison of NHS Health Scotland and Hugh Raven of the Soil Association. I thank them for coming.

Was the Scottish Executive's consultation on the bill effective and were your organisations allowed to participate in it?

**Audrey Birt (Diabetes UK):** The consultation was wide and we were allowed to participate in it. We welcome the fact that it included environmental groups, which are an important aspect, as well as community groups and schools. We welcome the approach.

**David McCall (British Dental Association):** The British Dental Association did not get a copy of the consultation straight off, but became aware of it and submitted evidence. We feel strongly that we need to be involved in the process.

**Hugh Raven (Soil Association):** I will repeat what Mr McCall said: we became aware of the consultation; we were not sent it. Somewhat confusingly, after we submitted our response we noticed that it was not listed in the annex to the consultation response analysis. We therefore contacted the Executive and ascertained that our response had been taken into account. The same happened to several other groups. I suspect that some groups that responded are not aware that their responses were received and taken into consideration. In that respect, the process could have been conducted better. However, that is the only matter on which I have any criticism, because the process seems to have been effective.

**Mary Allison (NHS Health Scotland):** The process was entirely satisfactory for us. We were allowed to respond fully and we engaged actively in cascading the consultation through our partnerships and networks. We were encouraged and supported in that.

**The Convener:** As you will be aware, the bill will place a statutory duty on the Scottish ministers

and local authority education departments to ensure that all schools are health promoting. What benefits will that bring to Scotland's school children?

**Mary Allison:** It will accelerate the positive change that is already happening and strengthen the hand of schools and education departments in the community planning process. Much of the philosophy of health-promoting schools is about schools being at the heart of the community, which requires them to engage with a diverse range of partners. For example, schools need to get the people who have responsibility for road traffic to play their part in promoting safe routes to school and physical activity around schools. The duty will strengthen the hand of schools by enabling them to initiate and pursue the wide range of actions that they need to take. It will also give them a stronger hand in their work with parents, both in encouraging and supporting parents whom they know are moving in the right direction and in giving added incentive to those who need to be encouraged more.

The duty will strengthen the position of schools that are at the heart of partnerships. The issue is about accelerating the pace of change. We have some great examples in Scotland of schools that are doing outstanding work, but there are also schools that simply say, "Well, we are trying." The duty will mean that we will have a standard for that trying.

**David McCall:** From a dental point of view, the duty will be a major step forward. A lot has been done to promote beneficial measures for teeth, such as the tooth-brushing programmes in schools and nursery schools. The nutrition aspect of the bill will address harmful factors, so that, as well as adding pluses, we will be doing our best to remove some of the negatives that contribute to Scotland's poor oral health.

**Hugh Raven:** I am interested in what my colleagues said. I agree with Mary Allison that the duty should accelerate change and encourage schools to develop a culture in which the issues are taken more seriously. More specifically, the inspection regime should change to ensure that, as a formal part of the process, consideration is given to whether the statutory targets are being met. At present, it is a rare event for an inspection to consider school meal nutritional standards, so that needs to become much more common. I hope that that will flow from the duty.

The duty should also allow improvements in the nutritional value of the food that is provided outwith the main lunch-time meal. That will be an additional significant benefit. I am sure that we will consider that at some point later in our discussion this morning.

However, the duty will not of itself be enough to effect a culture change. Change needs to extend much further. In our experience from the Soil Association's food for life programme, the most important thing that a school can do to re-engage pupils with the quality of food is take them out of the school environment and on to a farm, where they can see how food is produced and reconnect with the production process. There has been no implication that such things will be part of health-promoting schools, but they should be.

Other cultural aspects as well as the benefits to children's health need to be taken into account in the preparation of school food. We need to familiarise children with not just the production and preparation of food but the culture around consuming food. We need to ensure that the school meal is an enjoyable experience that is given a social focus. It should not just be a process of getting food into children. Those are slightly nebulous concepts, but they are important from a cultural point of view.

**Audrey Birt:** We welcome the duty from the point of view that it will help to accelerate change. We also welcome the fact that the serious problem of obesity among children in Scotland has been recognised. Whereas type 2 diabetes used to be known as a maturity-onset condition, we are now seeing it in children. We know that between 28 and 40 children in Scotland have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. Work that we have done suggests that about 1,400 children in the United Kingdom potentially have the condition. Not only does type 2 diabetes carry with it all sorts of complications and risks but, according to research from the United States, children tend to develop those complications earlier than adults do. There has been much talk of time bombs, which is perhaps an overused phrase, but that is what we face. We welcome the bill's approach as it will reinforce the importance of the issue and accelerate change.

**The Convener:** Finally, do the different organisations believe that any issues should be covered in guidance as a result of the statutory obligation that will be placed on local authorities?

**Mary Allison:** We assume that the guidance on food and nutrient standards will be fairly comprehensive, but attention needs to be given to the guidance on how authorities are to fulfil their duty in relation to health-promoting schools. We know that many aspirational statements tend to be contained in guidance. Many schools will know exactly what it means to be health promoting and how they need to pursue that aim but, at some levels, the idea could remain just rhetoric. The guidance needs to be specific about the standards and outcomes that are expected of health-promoting schools. The guidance should state

how the schools will be performance managed to ensure that they make progress towards a standard rather than just a general aspiration about health improvement.

Given the collaboration that will be required of health-promoting schools, we also need to consider whether there is scope to give guidance to the other public sector partners who should perhaps be obliged to come to the table to assist schools to be health promoting. The concept of health-promoting schools is such that it is not possible for schools to deliver and implement it by themselves. We need to consider the wider environment. For example, the planning department might have a role in examining what on the doorstep of a school might affect its ability to be health promoting. The guidance on how schools are to be health promoting will need to be thought through in some detail.

**Hugh Raven:** I will also chip in on the issue of guidance. Like my colleague Mary Allison, I believe that guidance will be vital for implementing the bill. As she perhaps implied, some issues that it would be inappropriate to provide for in the bill will nonetheless be as important as the statutory elements.

One issue that I would add is the sustainability of the food that is procured for our schools. We hear a good deal of rhetoric from the Scottish Executive about sustainable procurement. I concede that the Executive has taken a certain amount of action in that regard, but it has done nowhere near enough.

The Soil Association worked with 11 local authorities on school meal provision, to develop our food-for-life targets. If the targets are met, there are significant spin-off benefits to the community and the local economy, as well as in relation to familiarising pupils, teachers and school catering staff with the cultural connections that are so important if people are to take healthy eating more seriously. Healthy eating is as much to do with an attitude as it is to do with what is put on the plate in front of us.

The targets in our food for life programme are that 75 per cent of food should be made from unprocessed ingredients, 50 per cent of ingredients should be sourced locally and 30 per cent of the food should be organic. The targets are being implemented in local authorities in Scotland, most prominently by East Ayrshire Council. I hope that members will want to discuss further the benefits of the programme, which have been recorded by the Scottish Executive. As I said, there are local economic and social benefits. We commend our food-for-life targets, which should be incorporated in the guidance, rather than in the bill, to ensure a sustainable food supply.

**The Convener:** Committee members are looking forward to our visit to East Ayrshire next week, where we will see what is happening in schools that are in partnership with the Soil Association.

Do other witnesses want to respond to the question about guidance?

**David McCall:** The guidance indicates strongly that we should not add sugar to drinks or sell confectionary. However, the acidity of some drinks should also be considered. Fruit-flavoured drinks might not contain artificial sweeteners or sucrose, but their acidity is still of concern, because it causes dental erosion. I hope that the committee will give me an opportunity to say whether drinking through straws is beneficial to teeth.

**John Home Robertson:** Yes, please do.

**The Convener:** You may cover the point now, Mr McCall.

**David McCall:** It has been demonstrated that using a straw can reduce the contact of the consumed item—the soft drink or whatever—with teeth. However, children drink flavoured drinks because they like the flavour, so we should consider the location of the sensors that identify flavour. Children will not knock a drink back unless it is a horrible, horrible medicine, in which case they will suck on the straw as fast as is physiologically possible, so that they can swallow the medicine quickly. However, soft drinks are drunk for pleasure, which is derived from the drink's texture and the feeling that it creates in the mouth through the sensory perception of flavour. Children maximise that perception. We have all seen a child drink a fizzy drink through a straw and then swish the drink round their mouth until the drink has gone flat. Straws are a good idea in theory but, in practice, when we are dealing with children, they are a non-starter.

**John Home Robertson:** It is good to have that on the record.

**Scott Barrie:** That was a useful explanation. If the expert group's recommended nutrient standards are introduced, what benefits will there be to oral health in children? We have talked about the acidity of soft drinks.

11:45

**David McCall:** The majority of oral disease in childhood occurs in dental hard tissue. Dental caries are caused by the frequency and duration of exposure to sugars, so the recommendation that drinks containing sugar and confectionary should not be sold will have a marked impact. During school hours, which are most of children's waking hours, children's teeth will be able to

recover from the sugar onslaughts at breakfast and tea time.

Between-meal snacking is of particular concern in terms of dental health. If sugary snacks are involved, children's teeth are effectively bathed in a nutrient system for bacteria. The sugars are metabolised by the bacteria, and not just in an on-and-off manner. We are talking about an effect that lasts for between 20 and 30 minutes from the time that the sugar-containing item is consumed. Likewise, it takes a considerable time for our saliva to neutralise the acid in drinks.

There is an on-going fight in our mouths between the natural protection that saliva gives and the onslaught of what we put into our mouths. If we can reduce the attack, whether from the acid in drinks or the sugar in drinks and foods, our teeth will be given a chance to recover. A healthy diet throughout life is also beneficial to our soft tissues. As far as repair and periodontal health is concerned, people need to have a healthy diet. If someone has an unhealthy diet, they are more likely to suffer from oral cancer or the exaggerated responses of periodontal disease.

By tackling the issue in children, the bill will make a very good start. However, I am keen to ensure that the education authorities do not shoot themselves in the foot by giving out the right message while continuing to sell or provide the wrong products. If they do that, children will wonder what is going on.

**Patrick Harvie:** If someone chooses to consume a canned drink, whether they drink it straight from the can, through a straw or via a tube down their throat, they want to experience the flavour. Does the expert working group's recommended approach of focusing on changing the levels of sugar, artificial sweeteners and so on in liquid drinks rather than products such as yoghurt make sense to you?

**David McCall:** Not really. It does not matter whether the drink is in the form of a true liquid or a food that is turned into a liquid—which is what chewing does in any case. The problem is the acidity that is in contact with the enamel and the sugar—sucrose, dextrose or whatever—that is in contact with the oral bacteria. It does not matter how the liquid is dressed up: the problem lies in the effect that it has on teeth.

**The Convener:** We went off on a little tangent there, albeit a helpful one. Before we move on, do you have anything to add on the guidance, Audrey?

**Audrey Birt:** Yes, but if I may, convener, I will first say something about sugary drinks.

**The Convener:** Please do.

**Audrey Birt:** There is increasing evidence on the contribution that sugary drinks make to

obesity. For example, they have more calories than similar food products have, and liquids do not bulk up in the same way as foodstuffs do, so people who drink sugary drinks consume large amounts of calories and yet, because the drinks do not make them feel full, they go on to eat foodstuffs. Coca-Colanisation has been blamed for the worldwide increase in diabetes. In Scotland, perhaps the effect should be called Irn-Bruanisation, but that does not roll off the tongue in quite the same way. Whatever we call it, fizzy drinks play a large part in obesity.

Along with the health promotion aspects, it is important that the guidance to schools includes disease prevention messages, as that will reinforce the importance of the behaviour change. We also want to raise a note of caution on the guidance. Children who live with long-term conditions such as type 1 diabetes need to have access to the snacks and drinks that help them when they have a hypoglycaemic attack. We must ensure that the guidance sets out their need to have access to such food and drink. That is an important issue.

**Tricia Marwick:** As the witnesses know, the Executive's hungry for success initiative does not set statutory nutritional standards for school lunches. The bill will set statutory standards for lunches and snacks that are provided in schools. What do the witnesses think about that?

**Audrey Birt:** We welcome the move to statutory standards. As I said, children who have type 1 diabetes can be managed in schools. We welcome the removal of high-calorie snacks and drinks from vending machines, but such items should be available for children who have type 1 diabetes, if they need them. There should be no complexity or stigma in accessing such products.

**David McCall:** The introduction of statutory standards will be hugely beneficial, because it will mean that children who are catered for by the school catering system receive a meaningful meal or snack rather than, as a committee member said, rubbish, which would be disadvantageous instead of advantageous to them.

**Hugh Raven:** The setting of statutory standards will make it possible to inspect regimes in a way that currently does not happen, as I understand it. The statutory nutritional standards will extend to food other than that provided at lunch time, so they will apply to morning and afternoon snacks and the food that is provided at breakfast and after-school clubs.

**Mary Allison:** We are in complete agreement with the approach, which will lead to consistent adherence to the standards and will accelerate change. From a public health perspective, we must be mindful that history tells us that such

policies often have a surge effect that is broader than the effect of the action that is taken, and can be difficult to quantify or predict. The bill will not only deal with food in schools but signal a much broader attempt to tackle public health.

The introduction of seat belts had an impact on traffic accidents and tobacco legislation is having an impact on smoking. The bill will send a strong signal that the nation cares about its health and will have a ripple effect beyond the school environment. For example, the committee heard about the bill's impact on the food industry, which will have to reformulate products. When the public sector, which is a big consumer of food, starts to demand that food for schools be reformulated on a large scale, the industry will not produce different food for the supermarket, so healthier products will become available not just in schools but on supermarket shelves.

**Tricia Marwick:** I want to ask all the witnesses about the expert working group's recommendations, but first I ask Hugh Raven about the food-for-life target that 75 per cent of food should be unprocessed. I do not know whether you heard the discussion with members of the expert group about the amount of salt in processed food and the group's recommendation that ministers set an achievable target for salt content in food. Would the adoption of the food-for-life target on unprocessed food enable schools to meet a more rigid target on salt?

**Hugh Raven:** I think that the answer is yes, but I do not have adequate personal experience of whether that would be the case in the food-for-life schools. My colleague Pam Rodway is more involved with the programme and could add to my comments.

Intuitively, I think that the adoption of our target would make it much easier to adhere to the standard on salt. The target on unprocessed food means that raw products are brought into the school kitchen and prepared on site, so the amount of salt is entirely at the discretion of the school staff, and they are not required to rely on the reformulation to which Mary Allison referred.

I am sure that the reformulation will be an important part of the change to Scotland's school meals that we are seeing and that Gillian Kynoch is celebrating already as a result of hungry for success. Reformulation is well under way and it is bound to be a good thing, but schools will gain more control and added benefit if they go for a higher proportion of unprocessed food.

**Tricia Marwick:** Does anyone have any comments on the recommended standards, not necessarily just on salt but on nutritional values?

**Audrey Birt:** A lot of evidence supports the premise that unprocessed foods have a positive

impact on what people eat and on reducing obesity. We welcome the use of unprocessed foods, but I cannot comment on the achievability of that in schools.

**Hugh Raven:** I referred earlier to the importance of reconnecting people with where their food comes from. Experience in East Ayrshire and elsewhere has shown that locally it is easier to get unprocessed food than processed food, which tends to encourage the re-establishment of local supply chains.

It is all very well having standards and ensuring that they meet the statutory guidelines, but if the food is not getting into the children the effort is wasted. Our experience is that reconnecting children with where their food comes from—which is easier if the food is unprocessed—can significantly increase the uptake of school meals.

You will have seen the publicity at the weekend about the decline in school meal uptake in some English schools as a consequence of increased standards being applied. That conflicts with our experience, which is that school meal uptake has increased in all the schools with which we have worked for a protracted period of time. We think that that is as much to do with the cultural changes to which I referred—reconnecting people with where their food comes from—as with tastier school meals and the differences that are perceived on the palate. That important aspect is not currently covered by the proposed guidelines. They are excellent, as far as they go, but they could go further to incorporate the sourcing issues and the origin of food.

**Scott Barrie:** I will direct this question to Mary Allison. How will the bill benefit public health in Scotland?

**Mary Allison:** There will be a direct and immediate impact on children as the consumers of the food in schools. I cannot paint a more terrifying picture of childhood obesity and diabetes in the future than the images that we are seeing now of children aged 15 who weigh the same as their father who has taken 40 years to get to that weight. Those 15-year-olds will be considerably heavier when they are 40 than their parents are. The accumulation of weight over a lifetime is a serious public health issue that has huge repercussions for the national health service, for people's quality of life and for their ability to engage in economic activity.

The health impact on children will be massive in preventing weight gain, introducing them to a healthy diet and giving them the opportunity to engage. It is critical that the bill is to be implemented with the broader agenda for health-promoting schools, because it will give schools the opportunity to engage with the community,

including parents, in facing broader public health challenges. It will not just be about the meals that children have in schools—we can control and influence that—but about influencing the community, and that is where the public health spin-offs of the proposed legislation will be. We see the role of schools as engaging with and signalling to parents, partners and staff. We should not underestimate the amount that we need to do to support teachers in their efforts to become healthier. The bill will give us a massive opportunity to do that.

Of course, obesity and diabetes are at the top of the list. However, we also need not only to tackle coronary heart disease but to consider the increasing amount of robust evidence that is emerging each year on certain cancers of which communities are much less aware. People in many communities almost expect to get heart disease, but many parents are shocked to learn about the links to cancers in their children's diet.

12:00

**Scott Barrie:** I take your point about the wider public health agenda. After all, given what young people eat outside school—especially at home—one healthy meal a day for five days in each week of the school term will not necessarily change their health overnight. As you say, the real task will be in how we engage with the wider community and change not only eating habits in school but lifestyles in general.

How will the bill's proposals shift the balance of the number of children who take school meals? In some schools that I have visited in my constituency, 65 to 70 per cent of children bring packed lunches. We are—rightly, I think—not going to insist on inspections of lunch boxes, but how can we ensure that, as well as getting everything else right in the process, we achieve greater uptake of school meals?

**Mary Allison:** A number of strategies can be introduced. In that regard, we welcome the fact that the expert working group has taken a pragmatic approach to changing nutrient standards. It has also accepted that any such move will require behavioural change and that immediately and radically changing things by bringing down the curtain on what is offered is not the most sensible strategy for anyone. The group's standards are tough, but its incremental approach should take children along to some extent and lead to an increase in uptake.

We must also ensure that the broader work on health-promoting schools is fully engaged with those schools. The guidance is critical in that respect, and we need to realise that children will very quickly pick up any wrong signals that might be getting through into the school environment.

I hope that the curriculum for excellence policy will reinforce some of the current health education work in schools and connect it to changes that are taking place in the system. Such a move, as part of the whole-school approach, will illustrate what schools are doing on this and help children to understand that these matters are connected. The health-promoting schools concept also presents opportunities to develop some of the strategies that Hugh Raven mentioned by engaging children in broader educational processes and making links not just to children's food but to the overall sustainability of their health and environment.

Many strategies can be brought to bear and, of course, a major challenge for schools will be to engage parents in the process. However, the bill might provide parents with a lever and strengthen their hand. We know, for example, that they require support, but their tougher line on certain matters can be undermined by slightly different approaches that might be taken in schools.

The guidance must also make it clear how the environment surrounding the school can be influenced to support the policy. We should not deal only with what is happening inside the school gate; we can, to a certain extent, influence the services that are offered around schools. Therefore, we need a number of educational and planning strategies and we need leadership strategies to support those who are involved in public health in taking a strong line and making it clear that, in some cases, we need to protect people from themselves. Children have told us that they want to change and that they know that certain things are not good for them, but they are surrounded by them and do not find it easy to change their habits. The rationale for the strategies on tobacco smoking was partly based on the fact that many people wanted to quit smoking and needed support—this is similar. Certainly, many teenage children accept that and would welcome some support so that they do not stand out from their peers in odd ways.

**Dave Petrie:** I will move on to snacks. Under the bill, local authorities will have the power to provide pupils with food or snacks at any time of the day. What benefits to children will the proposed power provide?

**David McCall:** It is not so much the power to provide snacks as it is the ability to control what is provided that will be of particular advantage in that it will enable us in dentistry to ensure that education authorities are not providing foods that are not beneficial to teeth.

**Dave Petrie:** Is the fact that local authorities will have the power to offer food at any time of the day, such as breakfast time, beneficial to children?

**David McCall:** Indeed it is. That is a further opportunity to maximise children's eating healthy

foods. Some children may not get breakfast at home: we see them going to school with their packets of crisps and fizzy drinks. If they know that they will get breakfast when they get to school, there will be no need for them to buy the less beneficial, less nutritious foods. Substitution is hugely beneficial. As we have heard, word will get out and the parents will learn what the education authorities are providing and, I hope, take that as the example that they need to follow. If the right food is given at breakfast time, that sets the children up and they will be less likely to want to nip out at break time to get other foods. It enables an holistic approach.

**Audrey Birt:** I agree. It is necessary to send consistent messages and to give children more access to healthier foods. For example, type 2 diabetes is linked to social deprivation—people on low incomes are often less able to provide their families with healthy meals, so healthy options in schools will help the education authorities to send consistent messages and give children good access to healthy food. The power, alongside the improved measures to reduce the stigma of free school meals, would provide additional benefits.

**Hugh Raven:** To pursue the free school meals thought for a moment, it seems to the Soil Association that the power is good and positive as far as it goes but, in the absence of information on how the Executive intends local authorities to use it, it is hard to say more. Is it intended that local authorities should provide to children who qualify for free school meals healthy meals in the morning and the evening? If that is the Executive's intention, it can be only a good thing, but it is not clear from the bill that that extension is intended.

**Dave Petrie:** My reading of the bill is that that option will exist, but the meals may be paid for or may be free.

**Hugh Raven:** In that case, if the power is intended to extend the range of food that schools offer to include breakfasts and afternoon or high tea, it must be beneficial that the same standards will apply to those. However, in the absence of that information, it is difficult to make a judgment.

**Mary Allison:** The consistency of the message is important. If we are taking the broader view on promotion of physical activity, for example, it is important that children have access to a healthy meal before they go on to do more activity. To help children to understand hunger and to eat when they are hungry is a healthy approach. It is important that children have access to appropriate foods and healthy options when they are hungry.

**Dave Petrie:** Will not there be disruption to the curriculum and will teachers get annoyed about kids wanting to snack all the time?

**Mary Allison:** The policy is also about helping teachers to understand the importance of nutrients

and hydration for children's learning. A long time ago, when I was at school, we were not allowed to drink in the classroom, which was not a good idea.

**Dave Petrie:** No. Children are allowed water, I think.

**Mary Allison:** We need to educate people and help them to understand that, when children are hungry or thirsty they need to eat or drink and have access to good-quality food and drink.

**Dave Petrie:** I would like to touch on the implications for education authorities. What issues do you think education authorities should take into account when making use of the power? I come from a rural area where a lot of the schools do not have kitchens and the food is transported to them, so there will be resource implications if they are going to offer snacks at any time of the day—staffing, catering and financial resources will be needed. Will complying with the legislation place a particularly heavy burden on education authorities?

**Hugh Raven:** That will depend on how the Executive intends to apply the policy in practice. In the absence of that information, it is difficult to respond. Application of the standards to all the food that is provided by schools seems entirely possible, but will it mean anything in practice and will schools be providing more than the school dinner that is currently the main focus of school catering?

**David McCall:** My understanding of the guidance and legislation is that they are to enable authorities to provide a restricted range of foods as snacks if they, not the children, feel that it is appropriate. The intention, as I understand it, is not to have children nipping out from lessons every five minutes because they want a snack, even if the snacks meet the nutritional standards. The intention is that, if schools are to provide snacks, they will have to be of the correct standard.

**Audrey Birt:** I assume that there could be fairly straightforward ways of meeting the requirements of the legislation without necessarily engaging people in hugely complex requirements. I mentioned the need for children who have type 1 diabetes to have access to snacks at appropriate times and Mary Allison talked about the fact that, although it is appropriate for people to have access to snacks, the arrangements do not need to be hugely complex. That makes sense.

**Mary Allison:** A lot has already been learned—there are examples of good practice and many creative solutions have been brought to bear on how the cost, training and human resource implications can be dealt with. Those lessons can be shared, and my organisation will have a role in supporting the networking and sharing of good

practice and in showcasing the creative solutions, as will the health promoting schools unit, Learning and Teaching Scotland and other bodies.

**Patrick Harvie:** I would like to ask about the food for life programme. Hugh Raven mentioned the targets of 75 per cent unprocessed, 50 per cent local and 30 per cent organic food, and talked about the impact on local economies and on control of salt levels. I am sure that meeting such targets would also greatly enable the reduction of a whole range of additives. Are there other benefits, either for health or in other areas, from the targets?

12:15

**Hugh Raven:** There are many benefits across a wide range of areas. We think that all the areas that are covered by the term “sustainable development” will benefit from the targets. There is ample evidence for that, and more is being collected all the time. I shall try, if my memory serves me adequately, to run rapidly through a series of examples that illustrate why we are so keen to pursue the programme.

The targets certainly bring local environmental benefits. The experience in East Ayrshire has been a reduction in food transport of some 70 per cent following the local authority’s adoption of the targets: the number of food miles that are associated with the authority’s school meals is 30 per cent of what it was. There are other environmental benefits: requiring that unprocessed, organic and local food be used encourages the re-establishment of a much more diverse local food economy and there are many well-documented environmental benefits and a number of social benefits from organic growing.

Our food for life programme includes not just the three targets that were mentioned, but a crucial additional fourth target on including food education in the curriculum. That involves getting children out onto farms and ensuring that teachers have the necessary teaching resources to help them to enthuse children about where their food comes from. The cultural and social aspects are equally important, in our judgment, and will feed through to an increase in school meals uptake because people will feel that they are more connected with the food and where it comes from.

The experience of the targets in England—the situation in Scotland has not been as well documented—is that pupil behaviour also improved significantly. A couple of years ago, in conjunction with Business in the Community, the Soil Association undertook a survey of local education authorities that applied the food for life targets. Of the 16 that responded, 15 said that there had been a significant improvement in pupil

behaviour as a result of the adoption of the targets. That has not been mentioned so far, but we can provide additional evidence on that if it would be helpful.

There are other benefits in terms of reskilling school staff and changing the school ethos to one that values food more highly. That also has spin-off benefits in terms of the children’s approach to food in their home lives. I could draw a number of other benefits to members’ attention, but I do not want to take up too much time.

**Patrick Harvie:** Do you agree that there is a bit of a philosophical difference between the approach that you are talking about and what we might see in some parts of Scotland where—leaving aside the question of what the food consists of—the physical environments of the canteens are reminiscent of McDonald’s or Kentucky Fried Chicken, with polystyrene cartons for people to eat out of and plastic forks and knives to eat with? Should we be trying to use this bill to shift the balance towards the development of the more holistic relationship with food that you are talking about?

**Hugh Raven:** That should certainly happen. I do not want to diminish the achievements of the hungry for success programme in moving towards that, however. Gillian Kynoch speaks extremely persuasively—evangelically, almost—about the importance of getting children to value the experience of going into the school dining room. We extend that to saying that the school dinner time is an important focus of the day. School food is not something to be grazed on during the process of the school day; it is something to be focused on during school dinner time in a dining room that feels like a welcoming environment and which provides a valuable social experience. The provision of adequate water is crucial and, as Patrick Harvie implied, good cutlery and china plates are an important part of the experience. All those elements relate to ensuring that people value food as an important social part of their lives as well as being necessary for nutrition.

The schools that have undertaken the food for life programme have turned the school dinner time into a much more important focus of the day that is, in itself, a contributor to the school curriculum. Rather than its merely being time-out from the important process of learning, lunch should be part of the learning process.

**Patrick Harvie:** Organic food, locally sourced food and even, I am sad to say, cooking of food using real ingredients are sometimes seen as elite or middle-class. Are you confident that, if the Scottish Executive said that some of those targets should be more widespread in Scotland, they could be achieved, particularly in some larger urban secondary schools?

**Hugh Raven:** Yes, but Patrick Harvie is right to raise that issue, because most of the authorities that have taken up the programme have been the more rural ones and some of the island ones. East Ayrshire is a bit easier to get to than Whalsay in Shetland but the same applies there.

The programme needs to be applied in our main urban population centres. We have less experience of that in Scotland, but our parent body in England has ample experience of getting good-quality school meals that follow food for life targets into major conurbations. There is no reason why that should not happen in Scotland—it is not happening yet, but we hope to work with a wider range of local authorities after the next election to ensure that it does.

**John Home Robertson:** Mr Raven talked about the supply chain, which for a long time has been phenomenally complicated in relation to procuring food for institutions such as schools. There is a culture of going to wholesalers—who get the food from goodness knows where—and expecting the whole range of products all year round. On the other side of the farm gate, if you like, there is not much of a culture of selling directly from farms and market gardens. How difficult is it to connect that up and to get people who are purchasing food for schools to go looking for what is available locally, perhaps at a lower price and of higher quality?

**Hugh Raven:** You are right to raise that difficult issue. In East Ayrshire, that process has happened successfully over time. I gather that the committee is going to examine the food for life programme in East Ayrshire—you will doubtless know more about it than I do by the time you return.

Where I live, in the north Argyll-Lochaber area, our local councillor wanted to rescind the catering contract with the contractor that was supplying school meals in our district, but the main impediment to doing so was that local supply chains do not exist. The Executive is addressing that problem in a variety of ways: for example, a number of Executive grant schemes have focused on re-establishing local supply chains. Nothing like enough is happening in that respect, but it is getting easier to get local food and East Ayrshire's experience illustrates that well. The same applies on Shetland, as I mentioned earlier, in Morayshire, in Inverness-shire and elsewhere. However, there is no doubt that the absence of local supply chains is an impediment.

To pursue that thought for a moment, after many years of decline, I point out that, the proportion of primary producers that sell direct is increasing. The committee will be familiar with the farmers market movement, which continues to grow rapidly. The number of farm shops is also growing significantly. Wide investment in smaller-scale

infrastructure at local level, assisted by Executive grants such as the marketing development scheme, has an important part to play. In our book, the biggest single driver of the relocalisation of food economies would be local authorities' starting to buy a lot of product for their schools to encourage that process. If the bill is implemented in a way that allows the targets that I have outlined to be pursued, it could be the most important single factor that is at the committee's hand to deliver in relation to the re-establishment of localised food economies in Scotland.

**Dave Petrie:** I congratulate Hugh Raven on the food for life programme. Could you become a victim of your own popularity? I do not know whether you have experienced this in East Ayrshire, but many children complain about having to queue for school lunches. The big challenge we have is to encourage children to stay in school to eat, which you are telling us is happening. However, have you found that there is a problem of kids eating outwith the school because of long queues for school lunches?

**Hugh Raven:** That is a good point. The programme has so far been applied mainly in fairly small schools, where getting the required quantity of food on plates has not been a particular issue. I am not sufficiently expert in the programme's application to comment further, but my colleague Pam Rodway knows a great deal about it. If it would be helpful, we could write to you about our experience elsewhere.

**Mr Jamie Stone (Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross) (LD):** I have not yet asked any questions because I am new to the committee. My question arises from Hugh Raven's answer to John Home Robertson. In the Highlands, an authority or school may be tempted to buy the cheaper Cyprus potatoes rather than local potatoes. Based on what you have said, is there an argument that the regime of subsidies to farmers could be changed or tweaked so that that payment would go instead to the local authorities, with the instruction that the grant is linked to their buying locally? In other words, there would be a 180° shift.

**Hugh Raven:** That is an interesting suggestion and I can see the merits in it, but I suspect that it would, under the European regulations that apply to farm payments, be a highly complex and probably unlawful thing to do. We need to think of other ways of achieving the same objective. Woe betide the person who, in initiating discussion, would suggest what Jamie Stone has just outlined to the National Farmers Union of Scotland. I like the idea, but under existing European Union regulations it would be difficult. I am sure that there are other ways of achieving the same

objective without falling foul of John Kinnaird and his colleagues.

**Mr Stone:** Or George Lyon.

**Hugh Raven:** Indeed.

**Mary Allison:** Public health has a tendency to take its eye off the ball in terms of the outcome. On the immediate need to manage children's health, we could argue that many things matter, but what is important is the nutrients that they are getting today and tomorrow. I can see many longer term and connected arguments relating to the source of those nutrients but, from a health perspective, the most important thing is that the nutrients be provided in schools now. We do not want to slow or divert progress on that. The history of public health is littered with important connections, but there is an immediate and critical opportunity here.

**The Convener:** That concludes the committee's questions. I thank the witnesses for their attendance. If there are other issues that have not been covered by the committee today, please feel free to write to us—we will give any further written submissions due consideration.

12:26

*Meeting suspended.*

12:28

*On resuming—*

## **Subordinate Legislation**

### **Land Registration (Scotland) Rules 2006 (SSI 2006/485)**

**The Convener:** The third item on the agenda is subordinate legislation. The Land Registration (Scotland) Rules 2006 (SSI 2006/485) will consolidate the Land Registration (Scotland) Rules 1980 to enable the modernisation of practice and procedure, particularly with regard to use of electronic communications, in the making up and keeping of the land register for Scotland and applications for registration. The rules will not introduce new policy or a new form of regulation but will, rather, make changes to existing practices. The Subordinate Legislation Committee had no substantive comments to make on the instrument.

Do members have any comments?

**Cathie Craigie:** The instrument represents a welcome reorganisation of the system.

**The Convener:** Is the committee content with the rules?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

**The Convener:** The committee will not therefore make any recommendation on the rules in its report to Parliament. Do members agree?

**Members** *indicated agreement.*

## Standing Orders (Change)

12:30

**The Convener:** Item 4 on the agenda is a proposed change to the standing orders. The Procedures Committee has written to all subject committees to seek their views on a request from the Subordinate Legislation Committee for a minor change to rule 10.3.2 to insert the word “normally” before the requirement for the Subordinate Legislation Committee to report

“no later than 20 days after the instrument ... is laid.”

The implications for subject committees are set out in the paper that the clerks have circulated. Given that the Subordinate Legislation Committee intends to continue to report on the majority of instruments within 20 days, there should be no significant impact on our committee. Does any member have a comment on the proposal?

**Patrick Harvie:** Is the Conveners Group the appropriate body to monitor whether, in the future, the majority of instruments are reported on within 20 days?

**The Convener:** I am not sure whether the Conveners Group is the most appropriate body to monitor that, but we can ask the question. Patrick Harvie's point is a good one. We are being given a commitment that the majority of reports will come within the 20-day time limit—

**Patrick Harvie:** And the rest within a few days of that.

**The Convener:** Yes. It will be interesting to know whether that turns out to be the case. We need to ensure that the change does not cause us problems in the future. In our response to the Procedures Committee, I suggest that we ask whether and how the change will be monitored. Are we agreed?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** I will write to the Procedures Committee to confirm that we are content with the proposal and put the question on monitoring. Are we agreed?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** In that case, I will inform the Procedures Committee of our decision.

12:32

*Meeting continued in private until 13:28.*



Members who would like a printed copy of the *Official Report* to be forwarded to them should give notice at the Document Supply Centre.

No proofs of the *Official Report* can be supplied. Members who want to suggest corrections for the archive edition should mark them clearly in the daily edition, and send it to the Official Report, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP. Suggested corrections in any other form cannot be accepted.

The deadline for corrections to this edition is:

**Wednesday 22 November 2006**

#### PRICES AND SUBSCRIPTION RATES

##### OFFICIAL REPORT daily editions

*Single copies: £5.00*

*Meetings of the Parliament annual subscriptions: £350.00*

The archive edition of the *Official Report* of meetings of the Parliament, written answers and public meetings of committees will be published on CD-ROM.

##### WRITTEN ANSWERS TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS weekly compilation

*Single copies: £3.75*

*Annual subscriptions: £150.00*

Standing orders will be accepted at Document Supply.

Published in Edinburgh by Astron and available from:

#### **Blackwell's Bookshop**

**53 South Bridge  
Edinburgh EH1 1YS  
0131 622 8222**

**Blackwell's Bookshops:**  
243-244 High Holborn  
London WC1 7DZ  
Tel 020 7831 9501

All trade orders for Scottish Parliament documents should be placed through Blackwell's Edinburgh.

**Blackwell's Scottish Parliament Documentation**  
Helpline may be able to assist with additional information on publications of or about the Scottish Parliament, their availability and cost:

**Telephone orders and inquiries**  
**0131 622 8283 or**  
**0131 622 8258**

**Fax orders**  
**0131 557 8149**

**E-mail orders**  
**business.edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk**

**Subscriptions & Standing Orders**  
**business.edinburgh@blackwell.co.uk**

#### **Scottish Parliament**

**RNID Typetalk calls welcome on**  
**18001 0131 348 5000**  
**Textphone 0845 270 0152**

sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk

All documents are available on the Scottish Parliament website at:

www.scottish.parliament.uk

**Accredited Agents**  
(see Yellow Pages)

and through good booksellers