

## **Review of the County Council's policy relating to the supply of Halal meat to schools**

### **Background and Advice**

In June 2017, with the current contract for the supply of Halal meat coming to an end the council is reviewing its current policy on supplying Halal meat to schools with the current contract coming to a clause. The Council's current policy is to provide both stunned and un-stunned Halal meat and this report sets out the implications of changing this policy to stunned meat only.

The provision of Halal meat within school meals is not without controversy. School meal providers have to tread a fine line between satisfying the dietary expectations of a significant section of the community whilst respecting both procurement law and food standards legislation.<sup>1</sup>

### **Key considerations**

- No single defined standard for Halal exists in the UK.
- A local authority may specify that animals must be stunned before slaughter within the supply tender.
- To favour one accreditation body over another would breach EU procurement law.

### **What does Halal mean, how is it defined and by whom?**

**Halal** - Arabic: 'Permissible' - Meat slaughtered and prepared in accordance with Islamic/Sharia law.

**Haraam** - 'prohibited by God, unwholesome, foul'.

The **Qur'an** makes reference to what is prohibited in terms of food and meat. From the verses, Muslims interpret what is Halal and Haraam (leaving scope for differing views).

Elements which are quite **clearly established for Halal slaughter** are:

- Only a permitted and healthy animal/bird can be slaughtered.
- Animal welfare is essential from farm to slaughter.
- The animal must be alive at the point of slaughter.
- Only a Muslim slaughter man using a sharp knife of adequate size can slaughter.
- The knife must be cleaned after each cut and sharpened out of sight.
- No animal must be allowed to see another being slaughtered or the blood.
- The windpipe, gullet, and preferably 2 carotid arteries and 2 jugular veins must be cut in a single action. Slaughter man must audibly recite "Tsmiyya" that is Bismillah Allahu Akbar ('in the name of Allah, Allah is greatest') at the time of doing the Zibah (religious slaughter).

The Qur'an is also clear as to **what is not permitted**:

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<sup>1</sup> Association of Public Service Excellence – The Halal Dilemma Sept 2011

- Meat from swine, carrion (dead/rotting carcass), carnivorous animals/birds, and blood.
- Animals that have been sacrificed to other gods.
- Animals that have not been fed on a natural diet.
- Alcohol – in context of meat production – alcohol based cleaners and solvents for hand wash or equipment cleaning.
- Meat by-products, such as meat based gelatine and lard, from animals which have not been slaughtered in accordance with Islamic/Sharia law.

Pivotal issue: **Stunning**

- The Qur'an does not expressly forbid stunning (animals must be alive).

This manifests itself with differences of opinion within Muslim communities and consequently there is no single authoritative body in the UK representing a single agreed definition/standard for Halal. This has led to divided supply of options and competing 'regulatory' regimes.

**School Food Regulations 2014**

The requirements for School Food Regulations 2014, are to ensure that food provided to pupils in school is nutritious and of high quality; to promote good nutritional health in all pupils; protect those who are nutritionally vulnerable and to promote good eating behaviour.

School governing boards must provide school meals to a pupil free of charge if the pupil and/or a parent meets eligibility criteria set out within the Education Act 1996 and a request is received for free meals to be provided either by the pupil or someone acting on their behalf. The free school meal must comply with the requirements for School Food Regulations 2014; also referred to as the school food standards.

From September 2014 every child in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in state-funded schools, is entitled to a free school lunch which must also comply with the school food standards.

The school governing board is also responsible for ensuring that the national school food standards are met.

Governing boards are strongly encouraged to work with its senior leadership team to develop a whole school food policy; setting out the school's approach to its provision of food, food education (including practical cooking), the role of the catering team as part of the wider school team and the school's strategy to increase the take-up of school lunches. This is expanded on further in The School Food Plan (Alliance) which places an onus on schools to adopt a whole school approach to school meals and food education.

The School Food Regulations 2014 require meat or poultry to be served on at least three days per week. Lancashire school meal menus are designed to comply with this requirement, with meat and poultry dishes being predominantly served between Monday and Thursday. Where a meat or poultry dish is included on a Friday, Roman

Catholic schools may adapt their menus to restrict the consumption of meat due to religious edict. However, the menu provision for the week must still include the provision of meat or poultry for a minimum of three days per week to ensure that the standards are met.

Prior to the School Food Regulations 2014, the government endorsed two sets of standards for school lunches:

- a) Food-based, which defined the types of food that children and young people should be offered in a school lunch and their frequency; and
- b) Nutrient-based which set out the proportion of nutrients that children and young people should receive from a school lunch.

The introduction of the School Food Regulations 2014 combined the benefits of these two standards, ensuring that the correct food choices and their constituent nutrients were reflected in the new standard. Meat and poultry are an important food group in respect of the 14 key nutrients, being a good source of protein, B vitamins and minerals, including iron and zinc.

Protein is required to repair body cells and make new cells, repair and build tissue. It is vital for building bones, muscle, cartilage, skin and blood. Zinc is needed for growth and maintenance in the body. It is also vital for the immune system and healing and is also used in the breakdown of carbohydrates.

Iron is required to make haemoglobin. Without haemoglobin the body cannot carry oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body, without enough haemoglobin we are susceptible to anaemia. B vitamins are involved in many metabolic functions, including energy metabolism. B12 is generally lacking in a meat free diet as it is difficult to obtain from other sources, other than breakfast cereals which are fortified.

In 2012/13, the County Council conducted a limited year group survey which identified that upwards of 67% of pupils in Burnley and Pendle secondary school, arrive to school without having consumed breakfast; thus limiting the intake of fortified vitamins and minerals from breakfast cereals.

### **Department for Education**

Advice from the Department for Education states that schools should make reasonable adjustments for pupils with particular requirements, for example to reflect medical, dietary and **cultural needs** and that school food menus are designed for the majority of the school population.

An evaluation of the benefits of universal free school meals was funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DH) between autumn 2009 and summer 2011. The pilot scheme and resultant evidence led to the then coalition government introducing universal free school meals for all infants and key stage 1 pupils from September 2014.

The universal pilot had a significant positive impact on attainment for primary school pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2, with pupils in the pilot areas making **between four and eight weeks' more progress** than similar pupils in comparison areas. These effects could have arisen either through the provision of free school meals directly or

through the wider activities that accompanied the pilot (such as the promotion of school meals and healthy eating to pupils and parents) or both.

The universal entitlement pilot also appeared to improve attainment by more, amongst pupils from less affluent families than amongst pupils from more affluent families. It also appeared to improve attainment by more, for pupils with lower prior attainment than for those with higher prior attainment.

Of particular note is the fact that the universal pilot approach improved outcomes among children from less affluent families: it increased the take-up of school meals among pupils who were already eligible for free school meals before the pilot was introduced and it had positive impacts on diet among these pupils. School staff in the qualitative case studies also noted that the pilot had a 'levelling effect' on the quality of lunches eaten by pupils from different backgrounds; the implication was that while the quality of packed lunches varied considerably by socio-economic background, all pupils taking school meals had access to a nutritious, balanced meal, thus reducing socio-economic differences in the quality of food eaten at lunchtime. The improvements in attainment in the universal pilot areas also appeared to be greater for children from less affluent backgrounds and those with lower prior attainment.

In July 2012, a report was presented to Lancashire County Council's Cabinet on an approach to increase the level of free school meals across Lancashire Schools. National evidence from take up campaigns suggested that the main reason for failure to claim was a lack of general awareness of entitlement, sometimes compounded by having to deal with a perception of a complex process of claiming free school meals. It was agreed that all Councils in Lancashire to joining up data to increase the level of free school meals across Lancashire schools (see Annex 2).

A move away from the current policy to supply both stunned and un-stunned Halal meat, may have adverse effects such as; fewer young people accessing their free entitlement of free school meals; risk of quality assurance within the supply chain; high uptake of packed lunches that don't meet the school food regulations; and longer term effects on attainment and achievement of young people, from high risk social economic backgrounds.

### **Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework**

Under Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework, which came into force in September 2015, inspectors assess how "children and learners keep themselves healthy, including through healthy eating". Inspectors will look at "the food on offer and visit the canteen to see the atmosphere and culture in the dining space and the effect this has on pupils' behavior. In a recent Children's Food Trust survey only 1% of packed lunches met the requirements for School Food Regulations 2014, the study also found anecdotal evidence that pupils behaviour was adversely influenced by the varying contents of packed lunches.

## Current situation

In Lancashire, we currently supply twenty seven schools, where the Governing Body has chosen Halal school meals, with 'un-stunned' Halal school meals as an option and cater for up to 12,000 children on roll. Not all 12,000 children will choose un-stunned Halal meat. These schools are within Lancashire County Council boundaries, Nelson, Burnley, Rawtenstall, Hyndburn and Preston including Blackburn with Darwen council area.

Financial information relating to these school catering contracts are detailed below under 'financial implications'. It explains that there is a potential loss of c.£285,000 (contribution to overhead) per annum, if these contracts are lost following this review. There is also the possibility that schools will seek alternative suppliers of Halal meat who may not be 'Accredited' suppliers. We currently offer meat accredited by the Halal Monitoring Committee which is a trusted quality brand amongst Lancashire's Muslim communities.

Another key factor to consider here is that there is currently no demand for stunned Halal meat from any school within the authority's catering service.

In Lancashire, where school meals are predominantly provided by the local authority, as a traded service, compliance with the school food standards is specified within the catering service level agreement and the catering service provide the governing board with evidence of compliance with the standards. The authority catering service is also intrinsic in ensuring that schools who use the service are able to meet their statutory obligations to provide pupil premium and universal infant free school meals.

The catering service strategy and pricing model acknowledges and communicates the combined benefits of increasing primary school meal uptake, with the price per meal charge to schools being lower the higher the school meal uptake percentage. Any reduction in school meal uptake has an adverse effect on the price per meal charged to schools and would most likely result in schools moving from a profit making school meal service to a loss making service.

As mentioned earlier, a reduction in school meal uptake may also impact upon the overall academic attainment levels; affect pupil's behaviour during lunchtime and afternoon lessons; and lead to an increase in the attainment gap between pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds. However, we cannot claim that a potential change in the County Council's current policy, would see academic attainment reduce as a direct result. There are other providers, other than the County Council, of Halal meat available to schools, to help them meet their cultural food requirements.

In reviewing this policy, we have also considered other County Council establishments where Halal meat may be in demand. Having consulted the Head of Service, Adults and Older People, at present, there is no current demand for Halal in residential care establishments however, there is a possibility of receiving requests via rehabilitation for Halal meat dishes and for future residents.

## Considerations

Nationally, Central Government and Local Authorities continue to address the needs of a diverse set of residents against the following issues:

- The UK's legal position in religious slaughter.
- Stunned or not stunned Halal – supply options and animal welfare matters.
- Labelling and food provenance.
- Possibility for a single supply option that respects both Halal and Non-Halal consumers.
- Halal

What the legislation says:

- EU/UK law requires farm animals to be stunned prior to slaughter (Halal and Kosher slaughter Guidance October 2015).
- Exemption for religious slaughter: Schedule 12 of The Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995 Jewish and Muslim.
- Significant meat producing countries such as Denmark (EU) and New Zealand legally mandate pre-stunning even for Halal slaughter.

The ability of the animal to feel pain following stunning is the subject of much debate and academic study and the exemptions to stunning are opposed by organisations such as the RSPCA who are opposed to the slaughter of any animal without first ensuring it is rendered insensible to pain and distress.

There is debate amongst Muslims about some aspects of the Halal rules, and there is no single set of national or international standards. In the UK, “Halal” is not defined in law. Instead, there are a range of Halal accreditation agencies who will inspect and accredit firms involved in the production and handling of meat in order for that meat to be described as Halal.

The two biggest accreditation agencies in the UK are currently the Halal Food Authority (HFA) and the Halal Monitoring Committee (HMC).

Whilst the two organisations agree on many things, there are also differences, perhaps most notably on the issue of stunning animals before slaughter. The HFA allows this in certain conditions, the HMC does not allow it at all.

In 2014, there was a Halal and Kosher meat debate in the House of Commons relating to the labelling of such meat at the point of sale. Part of this debate examined the method of 'slaughter labelling'<sup>2</sup>. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs at the time, (George Eustice), concluded that; *"such regulation should be introduced at a European level however, if one were to introduce compulsory method of slaughter labelling, I think one would go not for labelling as halal or kosher, for the reasons I gave earlier, but for labelling as stunned or unstunned"*.

In December 2013, written evidence was received from a number of the bodies listed below (see Annex 1 for further information). In reviewing the current policy, where

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<sup>2</sup> <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2014-06-12/debates/1406124000021/HalalAndKosherMeat>

the County Council supplies both stunned and un-stunned Halal meat to schools, a desktop exercise took place where the following information was gathered. Notably, none of the advice and guidance has changed:

- **Food Standards Agency (FSA)** - The animal **should be alive or deemed to be alive** at the actual time of slaughter and slaughter must be carried out in compliance with Islamic Sharia and the Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995 (as amended). The FSA animal welfare survey undertaken in abattoirs across Great Britain during one week in September 2013 showed around 84 per cent of animals slaughtered by the Halal method were stunned before slaughter.
- **Animal Welfare** - The ability of the animal to feel pain following stunning is the subject of much debate and academic study and the exemptions to stunning are opposed by organisations such as the RSPCA who are opposed to the slaughter of any animal without first ensuring it is rendered insensible to pain and distress
- **Halal monitoring Committee** – The British Law allows the Muslim to carry out religious slaughter **without stunning**.
- **Halal Food Authority** – **stunning allowed** as per European Council Regulation EC1009/2099
- **Humane Slaughter Association (HSA)** - The view of the HSA remains that all animals **should be effectively stunned** prior to being bled, because this precludes the possibility of suffering.
- **The Farm Animal Welfare Council (now Committee) (FAWC)** - “Slaughter **without pre-stunning is unacceptable** and that the Government should repeal the current exemption”. Until then any animal not stunned before slaughter should receive an immediate post-cut stun.
- **Muslim Council of Britain (MCB)** - At the end of the day, informed consumer **choice, rather than prejudice** should be the motivating factor here.
- **Lancashire Council of Mosques (LCM)** – a number of attempts have been made to meet with the LCM which have been declined. The LCM have engaged in the consultation and it is the view that based on the events in 2103, that the LCM will take the same view and boycott school meals.

#### **Advice received from Lancashire County Council services**

This isn't the first consideration of this item as referred to in Annex 1. The following advice looks at the impact of a potential change in policy to supply stunned meat only, to Lancashire schools;

#### **Financial implications**

Lancashire County Council currently supplies, where the school and Governing Body have chosen Halal school meals, Halal meat to twenty seven schools and caters for up to 12,000 children who are served over 1.2m meals per annum. Not all 12,000 children will choose Halal un-stunned as an option. These schools are in Blackburn, Nelson, Burnley, Rawtenstall, Hyndburn and Preston where the catering service employ 139 part time, term time, catering employees.

Currently, JW Young's are our Halal frozen meat supplier.

When considering a change in this policy, if Lancashire County Council were only to buy Halal stunned meat, there would be variable factors to such a decision.

- When Halal un-stunned (HMC) meat was banned from use in Lancashire in 2013, the Lancashire Council of Mosques asked all Muslim families to boycott Lancashire school meals completely, not just the ones who were affected by the ban of Halal un-stunned meat. This was followed not just in the schools who were affected by the ban of Halal un-stunned meat. The boycott resulted in a significant drop in meal uptake in schools serving both Halal and non-Halal menus and thus income and contribution. The effect was particularly damaging in the east of the county and the central Preston area where school meal uptake decreased by over 7%.
- The school meals service is charged to schools who in turn charge parents for paid meals or receive a price per meal from the government for universal infant free school meals. If the primary schools (Annex 2) are unable to satisfy the cultural food requirements of their pupils, and consequently their parents, there is a strong possibility that they will choose to contract with an alternative catering provider, or manage their own catering arrangements in house.
- Secondary school contract income is predominantly received from pupils, so again, if the secondary schools are unable to satisfy the cultural food requirements of their pupils there is a strong possibility that they will also choose to contract with an alternative catering provider, or manage their own catering arrangements in house.
- A potential reduction in the County Council's competitiveness in a commercial environment as it could see new entrants in the market place providing this service for example, other Council Catering Services. This would also limit the services diversification plans in entering new markets and territories. As a change in current policy would reduce our ability to provide a full end-to-end service.
- The **potential loss** of the twenty seven Halal school meal catering contracts would result in the loss of c.£2.5m of traded income and **c.£285,000 per annum** reduction in contribution to corporate overheads; plus reduction in food procurement rebates, plus any additional impact of another school meal boycott by the Lancashire Council of Mosques.

The impact of the loss of the twenty seven Halal school meal catering contracts, the headlines of which are:

- Food expenditure could decrease by £981,369 per annum, 75% of which is spent directly with local food manufacturers and distributors
  - 139 catering employees could be faced with TUPE transfer to alternative catering providers, or directly to schools.
  - Annual catering income could decrease by 8.36%
  - Annual contribution could decrease by 5.41%
  - 10.59% of Lancashire's pupil population may be affected
  - Food rebates could decrease by £28,000
- It is important to note that there is a potential risk of further income losses for the service if there is a wider boycott of school meals (as was the case in 2013) across Lancashire.



- Under the current policy where the council provides stunned and un stunned Halal meat. In the 27 schools there is currently no demand for stunned Halal meat, nor would there be an expected increase in demand for stunned Halal meat if the Lancashire Council of Mosques adopt the same position of boycotting all school meals and only advocating un-stunned Halal meat. Ultimately, schools and individuals will choose whether to accept stunned Halal meat should there be an absence of un stunned Halal meat.
- Our pricing model is based upon a sliding scale of charges whereby the higher the meal uptake the lower the meal charge to schools. Any resultant reduction in meal uptake from a change in policy would see the price per meal charged to schools increase.

As detailed above, there are the additional impacts, such as the government's school food standards, nutritional impact, obesity and diabetes, increase in packed lunch uptake and pupils leaving the premises for home lunches to be considered.

There is also the financial impact on the Muslim community, if they were to boycott school meals. Families may be encouraged to provide alternative food options for their children (which may not meet the School Food Regulations) whether this be as a packed lunch or provided at home. This also could lead to additional costs in terms of travelling from school to home and back again.

### **Legal implications**

It is possible that the Council would face a risk of challenge to a decision to procure only halal meat that has been stunned prior to slaughter. Such a challenge could be based upon an allegation that:

- (1) The Council has breached the Public Contracts Regulations 2015; and/or
- (2) The Council has failed to comply with the equality Act 2010

### **Procurement implications**

The County Council is obliged to procure in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (the "Regulations") which prohibit any form of tender process which effectively restricts or distorts competition. Accreditation (or any aspect of the accreditation including for example a restriction on stunning prior to slaughter) of meat as Halal is classed under the Regulations as a "technical specification"

Regulation 42 (10) states that:

"Technical specifications shall afford equal access of economic operators to the procurement procedure and shall not have the effect of creating unjustified obstacles to the opening up of public procurement to competition".

A requirement that animals should be stunned prior to slaughter could also be categorised as a "characteristic" of a technical specification addressed under Regulation 42 (6) which provides that:

"In the case of any public contract, the required characteristics may also refer to -

- (a) the specific process or method of production or provision of the requested works, supplies or services, or
- (b) a specific process for another stage of its life cycle, even where such factors do not form part of the characteristics' material substance provided that they are linked to the subject-matter of the contract and proportionate to its value and its objectives".

To stipulate one sole accreditation body, or a specific slaughter process, for Halal meat in Lancashire may breach Regulation 42 (10) if it could be proved that it creates an unjustified obstacle to potential bidders. However, Regulation 42 (6) suggests that there is some flexibility allowing authorities to specify processes as part of a technical specification provided that the process relates to what is being procured and does not for example lead to a disproportionate increase in costs.

It does not seem immediately apparent that limiting the range of possible bidders to those who stun animals prior to slaughter would either unfairly restrict competition or introduce an extraneous requirement that would be unreasonable of itself.

### **Equality Impact Implications and Assessment**

The County Council is under an obligation to consider each strategic proposal in terms of possible impact upon certain groups (defined in the Equalities Act 2010 by reference to protected characteristics). This process is usually undertaken by way of an equality impact assessment which addresses the potential impact of a proposal upon equality issues in a substantive and thorough manner. Whilst the Equalities Act 2010 does not prohibit public authorities from taking decisions which may detrimentally affect those with protected characteristics, authorities must have due regard to such matters when making relevant decisions. As the assessment attached as appendix C to this report makes clear, the review of the procurement of halal meat is likely to have an impact upon a number of groups with protected characteristics in a number of ways.

Undertaking an equality impact assessment evidences the process by which appropriate information is sought and analysed in terms of the potential impact upon groups with protected characteristics. The contents of the assessment must be considered when making a decision in order to be able to make a lawful decision and to evidence that relevant considerations have been taken into account.

Failure to comply with the Act and to evidence that this is the case has in the past proved a fruitful ground of challenge and the assessment should be fully considered as part of the decision-making process.

An Equality Analysis has been completed and can be found at Appendix C.

### **Academic implications**

As explained in detail above, the provision of a nutritious meal in the middle of the day to the children of Lancashire is of fundamental importance. This is not just a matter for Muslims or Muslim children. For some children, it may be the only meal they get in a day, and for all children, the importance of good nutrition in the

development and achievement is key. The aim of all the people involved in this ongoing debate has been to make sure that Lancashire is offering something to its children that presents them with a genuine choice, that presents them with meat they, and their parents, feel comfortable with as being reflective of their needs and wishes.

### **Economic implications**

The economic impact would affect the County Council, the suppliers the County Council currently trade with and the suppliers along the food chain, schools and families.

The international market for Halal is worth around £423bn making up approximately 16% of the global food market;

- 1.8 million Muslims live in the UK,
- 356,458 in the North West and
- 96,600<sup>3</sup> in the Lancashire 14 area.
  - Blackburn with Darwen (27.0%) and
  - Pendle (17.4%) had high rates of Muslims.
  - The Blackburn with Darwen rate was the third highest in England and Wales.

The debate is not just around the supply of Halal meat to schools, The Muslim Council of Britain claim that many popular curry houses and restaurants clearly displaying Halal, attract customers who are not often Muslims. They welcome any move by mainstream companies to cater for Muslim consumers. They also believe that at the end of the day, informed consumer choice, rather than prejudice should be the motivating factor here.

It is also understood that well known food retailers such as Nandos and KFC in the Blackburn area, only serve Halal meat based on studying the racial make-up of the area. It is difficult to qualify in figures, particularly in the global economic market place and where a number of establishments state to provide meat that is Halal whether this is stunned or unstunned Halal meat.

In terms of schools, the impact on schools has been explained in terms of them making a profit through take up of school meals against the potential loss of income if Halal supply did not meet the demand. As schools are now more self-sufficient and have a choice on whether to buy services from the County Council or elsewhere, a change in this policy could see a reduction in the number of school catering/lunchtime supervisor staff at certain times, due to the reduction in pupils staying in school for lunch.

There is also the potential for more schools to seek Academy status as we may be seen as not responding to the market. If we cannot supply choice within the market, schools may choose to buy elsewhere. Just by the County Council changing its policy, doesn't mean that schools will follow.

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<sup>3</sup> Census, March 2011 indicated that their religion was Muslim

## **Emergency Planning**

Government Guidance on evacuation and shelter (2014) requires Emergency Planners to consider individuals or groups who may require special care and attention and to consider potential special requirements. These could be for example, dietary (Halal food) cultural (unisex facilities) or religious (need for prayer facilities). A change in the County Council's policy will impact on our emergency responses planning.

## **Social implications**

The fact remains that slaughter without stunning for religious purposes remains legal in this country, and that government agencies such as the Foods Standards Agency have made it clear that there is no single 'correct' definition of Halal.

As identified by the Halal Meat Supplies Task Group, the opportunity remains that a choice is made available to Muslims at a local level. This could be achieved by allowing individual schools, if they so choose, to make a judgement for their own pupils on issues connected to accreditation and stunning. Parents would be able to make their views known to the Head Teacher and Governors of an individual school, and the County Council would be able to meet that requirement.

It should be noted that locally and nationally policy changes around the provision of stunned and un-stunned halal meat to schools may result in community tensions and some may use this policy to feed the agenda of the far right whose activity is currently growing across the UK and Europe. Community tensions are already heightened following recent terrorist attacks from both ISIL/Daesh and Far Right in London and Manchester. As experienced in 2013 there is likely to be a strong response from the both the Muslim community and far right activist impacting negatively on community tensions, community cohesion and integration across our Lancashire communities.

This policy area has the potential to lead individuals undertaking acts of hate incident/crime and Leaders/ Governing Boards/ communities spokespersons will have a role and be key to managing this . Extreme hate ideology can be a trigger along with other frustrations of an individual that lead to them to carrying out a terrorist act. Evidence shows that the community tensions are very delicate at the moment. From the opposite spectrum certain communities can feel marginalised and feel they are being targeted by the effects of policy changes made by public bodies e.g. the Muslim community and Halal meat provision. This can be exacerbated by press coverage and social media comment.

However, there is support available from across Lancashire agencies to respond following any referrals or concerns raised.

Thought and consideration also needs to be given in terms of Lancashire's Muslim population where they have expressed a preference for un-stunned Halal meat only and that the Jewish community will only accept un-stunned meat and will watch closely what happens in the Muslim community.

Cultural leadership across Lancashire is very strong and the County Council should be mindful of the reaction of communities and schools, who may perceive the authority distancing themselves from their cultural needs and differences and thus marginalising the affected schools.

## **Communications**

The last time un-stunned Halal meat was banned in school meals there was a significant amount of negative media attention, particularly focused on opposition to the policy by the Lancashire Council of Mosques, and their boycott of Lancashire school meals.

Media reaction this time around is likely to be determined by the reaction of the Muslim community. If the Lancashire Council of Mosques again opposes the policy, as seems likely, then it would be reasonable to assume that more negative stories will again be generated.

## **Consultations**

. The following information/reports/views have been considered:

- Report of the Halal Meat Supplies Task Group: December 2013.

In addition a desk top exercise has been conducted to research the current national and local intelligence relating to the supply of halal meat, particularly to schools. The main bodies referred to are:

- Food Standards Agency;
- Halal Monitoring Committee;
- Halal Food Authority;
- Humane Slaughter Association;
- The Farm and Animal Welfare Council;
- Muslim Council of Britain;
- Lancashire Council of Mosques.

Consideration has also been given to the demographics of the areas most affected by this policy and representatives from key service areas within the county council have been consulted, including School Meals/Catering Service, Legal, Procurement, Adult and Older Peoples Services and Equality and Cohesion.

A 4-week public consultation exercise was launched during which, the council continues to supply halal meat under the terms of the contract that supports current policy.

The consultation was carried out between 7 February and 7 March 2018. The consultation report can be found in Appendix C

## **Implications:**

This item has a number of implications, as indicated above.

### **Risk management**

This report has significant risk implications as detailed above and are summarised below:

- Legal – Animal Welfare vs. School Food Regulations/Requirements of Sharia Law
- Procurement – restrict/distort competition
- Finance – potential loss to LCC and individual schools
- Community – increase in community tensions
- Market place – not seen as a supplier of school meals to Muslim schools

The monitoring and review of these risks have been included in the Policy, Information and Commissioning Team's Risk Register.

### **List of Background Papers**

<b>Paper</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Contact/Tel</b>
Lancashire Education Act 1984 The Asian Religions – Their Dietary Restrictions (Annex 5)	12 <sup>th</sup> March 1984	Ajay Sethi 01257 517100
Report of the Halal Meat Supplies Task Group)	6 <sup>th</sup> December 2013	Josh Mynott 01772 534580
Procurement of a supplier or suppliers to provide Lancashire County Council with frozen Halal meat (Annex )	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2014	Rachel Tanner 01772 534904