

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Report to the Cabinet

Meeting Date: 16 July 2019
Cabinet Member: Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams
Contact Officer: Bethan Griffith
Contact Number: 01286 679 195
Item Title: Primary School Meal Price September 2019

1. DECISION SOUGHT

Not to raise primary school meal income in line with inflation which means that the primary school meal price will not increase in September 2019.

2. REASON WHY DECISION IS NEEDED

If the department do not raise the meal price in line with inflation in 2019-20 it will create a deficit in the budget of £82,220.

3. INTRODUCTION

The primary school catering service budget relies on generating income by selling primary school meals. There is a need for income generated from primary school meals to keep up the inflation of the catering service costs.

Primary school meals income target has risen 4.1% in 2019-20 due to an increase in costs – living wage cost is the main reason for the increase.

4. REASON AND JUSTIFICATION BEHIND THE DECISION

When comparing Gwynedd's primary school meal price of £2.50 with 15 other Council's in Wales (see appendix 1), it is one of the highest – only 3 other Council's is £2.50, the rest are cheaper.

Currently, an average 46% of Gwynedd primary pupils choose a school meal. 2016-17 average was 50% (meal price £2.30) and 2017-18 average was 46% (meal price £2.50). The above information shows that a number of parents have decided against choosing a school meal for their children following the price increase in

September 2017. Increasing the price could potentially further decrease the number choosing a school meal as it would not be affordable to families on low incomes who are not eligible for free school meals.

Increasing the meal price would mean increasing the price from £2.50 to £2.60.

5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

Meal price will be operational from September 2019.

6. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION

Statutory Officers opinion:

i. Monitoring Officer: No observations to add in relation to propriety.

ii. Head of Finance: Part 4 of the report highlights the risk of a further reduction in demand if the meal price is increased in primary schools, and therefore there is a clear rationale for the decision being sought. With regards to funding of the relevant gap in the Education Departments budget, I confirm that in formulating the Council's budget for 2019/20, a provision to this effect was set aside in a contingency budget.