

## GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



### Report to the Cabinet

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>24 November 2020</b>
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Bethan Griffith</b>
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<b>Item Title:</b>	<b>Primary, Special and All-Through School Meal Price January 2021</b>

#### 1. DECISION SOUGHT

Not to raise primary, special and all-through school meal price in January 2021.

#### 2. REASON WHY DECISION IS NEEDED

If the department do not raise the meal price in line with inflation in 2020-21 it will create a deficit in the budget of £48,700. Therefore, it's appropriate to obtain the Cabinet's formal confirmation that not raising the school meal price this year is a priority for the Council.

#### 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 2.56% in 2020-21 which would increase meal price from £2.50 to £2.56. In rounding up this would be £2.60 (equivalent to 4%).

However, when considering our relative position and priority we have in terms of reducing inequality, the Cabinet may wish to consider the price of school lunches in this context.

#### **4. REASON AND JUSTIFICATION BEHIND THE DECISION**

When comparing Gwynedd's primary, special and all-through school meal price of £2.50 with other Council's in Wales (appendix 1), 4 charge a higher price, 4 charge same price as Gwynedd and 13 charge a lower price.

See attached (appendix 2) results of a questionnaire sent to primary school parents October 2019, 134 noted that schools meals were too expensive and 142 would chose a school meal if cheaper.

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 January 2021.

#### **6. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO MAKING THE DECISION** **Statutory Officers opinion:**

**i. Monitoring Officer:** Because of the consequent financial implications stemming from the recommendations I agree that it is appropriate that setting the fee level for school dinners comes before the Cabinet.

**ii. Head of Finance:** The results of the questionnaire referred to in part 4 of the above report highlight the risk of a further reduction in the demand for school meals should there be an increase in the price this year.

As reported to the Cabinet in the Revenue Budget Review on 13<sup>th</sup> October, there will be sufficient flexibility (£311k) in the Education Department's 2020/21 budget to cope with the cost (£49k) unaided from the 'central funds' which is the decision sought for here.

However, if consideration is given to a longer term policy for the price of school meals, we will need to adjust the relevant income level appropriately when drawing up the 2021/22 budget.