

## **GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET**



### **Report to a Meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet**

**Date of Meeting:** 15 February 2022  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Cemlyn Rees Williams  
**Contact Officer:** Bethan Griffith  
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**Item Title:** Primary, Special and All-through Schools Meal Price September 2022

#### **1. THE DECISION SOUGHT**

Not to increase primary, special and all-through school meal price in September 2022.

#### **2. THE REASON WHY A DECISION IS NEEDED**

Not increasing the price of school meals in line with inflation from September 2022 would mean £107,190 pressure on the Education Department's budget in 2022/23. By September 2022, foundation phase pupils (ages 4 to 7) will receive free school meals and any increase will only effect key stage 2 pupils (ages 8 to 11). Therefore, it is appropriate to obtain the Cabinet's formal confirmation that not increasing the school meal price this year is a priority for the Council.

#### **3. INTRODUCTION AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS**

As the primary, special and all-through catering budget relies on generating income from the sale of school meals, the income from meal sales in primary, special and all-through schools needs to keep up with inflation in the service costs.

The costs of providing primary, special and all-through school meals have increased by 5.8% in 2022-23 and to meet these costs the meal price would need to be increased from £ 2.50 to £ 2.65.

However, given our relative position and our priority in reducing inequality, Cabinet may wish to consider the price of school meals in this context. Only children of families on benefits are eligible for the Free school meals scheme and increasing the price of school meals at a time when many families in the county are facing very challenging times would add to the financial burden they face at this time.

#### **4. REASONING AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION**

When comparing Gwynedd's primary, special and all-through school's meal price (£ 2.50) with other Council's in Wales (appendix 1), 5 charge a higher price, 2 charge the same price as Gwynedd and 14 charge a lower price.

Increasing the meal price in line with inflation would place Gwynedd in the top quartile of meal prices in Wales. Not increasing the meal price would bring us closer to the bottom quartile.

Increasing the meal price to cope with the effects of inflation would mean an increase from £ 2.50 to £ 2.65.

#### **5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE**

Inform Gwynedd schools that the price of school meals will be frozen again for the next academic year and that the Council will fund the financial gap from central funds without impact on the Education budget.

#### **6. ANY CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN PRIOR TO RECOMMENDING THE DECISION**

##### **Views of statutory officers:**

##### **i. Monitoring Officer:**

*No observations to add in relation to propriety.*

##### **ii. Head of Finance:**

*I confirm that the financial figures in this report are fair estimates. With regard to funding the relevant budget gap in the Education Department, I confirm that in drawing up the Council's draft budget for 2022/23, a*

*general provision has been set aside in a contingency budget that could be used for this purpose.”*