

Report to	Cllr Huw Hilditch-Roberts, Lead Member for Education, Children's Services and Public Engagement / Cllr Julian Thompson-Hill, Deputy Leader & Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets
Date of report	2 nd June 2021
Lead Member / Officer	Tony Ward, Head of Highways and Environmental Services
Report author	Nigel Highfield, Principal Manager: Catering & Cleaning
Title	School Meal Price Increase – 1 st September 2021

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1 To increase the price of School Meals from 1st September 2021.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1 To gain Lead Members delegated decision to increase the School Meal prices from 1st September 2021.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1 It is recommended that the price of school meal increases by £0.20p, with effect from 1st September 2021, as outlined in Appendix A to this report.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the School Catering team is authorised to automatically raise school meals by up to £0.05p each financial year. This is required to keep up with the food market prices, and negates the need to seek approval for larger price rises every few years. This increase will be reviewed each year in line with the departments' performance, and adjusted if necessary. If it is felt that a larger increase than £0.05p is required in any year, this will be highlighted via the annual budget process, and will be subject to a Lead Member Delegated Decision Report.

4. Report details

- 4.1 The Denbighshire School Catering service has not increased its school meal prices for 3 years. The attached report, at Appendix A, outlines the rationale for this recommendation in further detail, and the subsequent request for a Lead Member delegated decision.
- 4.2 The proposed increase of £0.20p on a school meal is required for the following reasons, and for ease is broken down:
- 10p to cover BREXIT (as outlined in Paragraph 4.1 of Appendix A) and general inflationary costs, and to maintain the level of service currently provided.

- 10p to provide a contribution to the savings required to deliver the agreed council budget for FY21/22.

4.3 The table below shows current and proposed prices in Denbighshire compared to other local authority areas in North Wales. This demonstrates that, even after the proposed 20p price increase, a school meal in Denbighshire will still cost less than in most other areas in the region.

Local Authority	Primary	High School	Adult
Anglesey	£2.50	£2.60	£4.44 (including VAT)
Conwy	£2.70	£2.75	£3.63 (including VAT)
<i>Denbighshire (current)</i>	<i>£2.20</i>	<i>£2.35</i>	<i>£3.60 (including VAT)</i>
<i>Denbighshire (proposed)</i>	<i>£2.40</i>	<i>£2.55</i>	<i>£3.84 (including VAT)</i>
Flintshire	£2.30	£2.50	£3.10
Gwynedd	£2.50	c.£2.60 (varies)	£3.60 (including VAT)
Wrexham	£2.40	£2.45	£3.84 (including VAT)

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

5.1 The increase in School Meal prices will ensure that this statutory, and vital, service to school pupils in Denbighshire is maintained and sustainable for the future.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1 There will be no costs to any other service. An element of the School Meal price increase is aimed at reducing the corporate subsidy to Denbighshire School Catering service, which was a proposal that was agreed as part of the process for setting the council budget for 2021/22.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1 The Denbighshire School Catering Team is ranked in the top 5 in the UK, this is in part due to the healthy, affordable school meal service that it provides to all our school children/pupils who use this service during their school day.

7.2 The School Catering Team through the Free School Meal system will ensure that all children who qualify for FSM receive a hot meal during their school day. The School Catering Team also provides the School Holiday Enrichment Project during school holidays, a project funded by the Welsh Government and promoted by the School Catering Team throughout DCC.

7.3 For those families/guardians who receive Free School Meals (FSM), there will be no impact as they will be entitled to FSM.

- 7.4 There will be families/guardians who will be on the cusp of qualifying for FSM but are not entitled, however the price of school meals (even with the price increase) within DCC will still be lower (in many cases) than our nearest neighbouring authorities in North Wales.
- 7.5 DCC School catering service does promote the School Holiday Enrichment Project with all of our schools within DCC, which operates throughout the summer holidays for those children who may not be able to obtain a hot meal during the school holidays.
- 7.6 The School Catering team have worked hard in achieving the 40% local supply chain target, which in turn has brought the overall carbon footprint down for the service/authority and the cost of the actual food products themselves.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1 Both the Lead Member for Education, Children's Services and Public Engagement, and the Interim Head of Education have been consulted throughout the report drafting, and budget setting processes. The mandatory delegated decision officer group have been consulted on the contents of this report.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1 The recommendation is supported and is broadly in line with the Fees and Charges Policy which states that:
- All charges are assumed to increase annually by the rate of inflation (usually CPI, to be determined by the Head of Finance) unless a business case dictates otherwise.
 - The council will generate enough income so that the service meets its costs (including on-costs).

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1 The main risk of not increasing School Meal prices in FY2021/22 is that it will inevitably lead to a further added strain to the Corporate Subsidy to this statutory service, which has not increased its School Meal prices for 3 years. Added to this, is the ongoing price increases caused by BREXIT, and to a certain degree the added logistical problems caused by the ongoing COVID19 Pandemic.

11. Power to make the decision

- 11.1 The Councils Constitution delegates authority for officers and lead members to make certain decisions. The extent of that delegation is set out in Section 13 of the Constitution, which accordingly covers this Lead Members Delegated Decision. Appendix 2 (b) to Section 13 of the Constitution sets out the Scheme of Delegations to Lead Members.