

| | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee</p> <p>18 September 2017</p> |
| <p style="text-align: right;">Title</p> | <p>School meal price for September 2017/2018</p> |
| <p style="text-align: right;">Report of</p> | <p>Strategic Director for Children and Young People</p> |
| <p style="text-align: right;">Wards</p> | <p>All</p> |
| <p style="text-align: right;">Status</p> | <p>Public</p> |
| <p style="text-align: right;">Urgent</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p style="text-align: right;">Key</p> | <p>No</p> |
| <p style="text-align: right;">Enclosures</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p style="text-align: right;">Officer Contact Details</p> | <p>Chris Munday Strategic Director for Children and Young People chris.munday@barnet.gov.uk 0208 359 7099</p> |

Summary

This report proposes to maintain the price of a school meal offered by the council's contracted school meal provider at its current level for the academic year 2017/18 at a maximum cost to the council of £282,000.

Recommendations

1. That the Committee agree to maintain the price of a school meal offered by the council's contracted school meal provider at its current level for the academic year 2017/18 at a maximum cost to the council of £282,000

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 This report proposes to maintain the price of a school meal offered by the council's contracted school meal provider at its current level of £2.15 a meal for the academic year 2017/18.
- 1.2 Barnet council contracts with Cambridge Education to provide its school meals service, delivered through Cambridge Education's relationship with ISS. Approximately 15,000 school meals are provided in around 70% of Barnet schools each day through this contract. The council's catering provider has submitted evidence of the current inflationary pressures in providing school meals that would be met by a 10p per meal increase in the price of each school meal to £2.25 from September 2017. By maintaining the current price of the school meal at £2.15 a meal, the catering provider is entitled to compensation for the inflationary pressure. The estimated maximum compensation is £282k.
- 1.3 The maintenance of the current meal price is for the academic year 2017/18 unless the council chooses to continue to subsidise meal prices into the future. If no further subsidy is made available, in September 2018 it is possible that a larger price increase than 10p per meal will be required to cover inflation over the two year period 2017/18 and 2018/19.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The maintenance of the price at its current level is being taken in recognition of the importance of school meals for children and young people

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 Consideration was given to increasing the school meal price offered by the council's contracted school meal provider by 4.6% (10p per meal). This was rejected due to the importance of encouraging uptake of school meals and the benefits of such meals to children.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The school meal price offered by the council's contracted school meal provider will be maintained at the current price for the academic year 2017/18. Detailed work will be undertaken to verify the resulting compensation claim from the council's contractor

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The quality of the education offer is at the heart of Barnet's continuing success as a place where people want to live, work and study. Excellent educational outcomes are key to deliver the council's vision set out in its Corporate Plan 2015-20 for Barnet's children and young people to receive a

great start in life'. Healthy school meals can lead to better health and improved educational outcomes.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 The council's contracted service provider has calculated that the one-off cost of holding the school meal price to its current level during 2017/18 is approximately £282,000. This amount will be funded by the savings from the Re management fee prepayment funds (Policy and Resources Committee, 27th June 2017, minutes not yet published). This position will need to be reviewed for 2018/19 when a larger price increase than 10p per meal may be required to match inflation over the two year period (2017/18 and 2018/19).

5.3 Social Value

5.3.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. The Cambridge Education contract permits the council to make decisions on pricing of school meal prices, subject to payment of a compensatory sum if this decision imposes additional costs on the contractor.

5.4 Legal and Constitutional References

5.4.1 As set out in the responsibility for functions (Annex A) of the Council Constitution (Section 15a), the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee has responsibility for services within Children's Services, including education and schools and is responsible for considering for approval of any non-statutory plan or strategy within the remit of the Committee, subject to this not being reserved to Full Council or Policy and Resources.

5.4.2 To authorise procurement activity within the remit of the Committee any acceptance of variations or extensions if within budget and in accordance with the responsibilities and thresholds set out in contract procedure rules.

5.5 Risk Management

5.5.1 There is a risk that the cost will be higher than the current estimated amount. This risk has been mitigated by detailed costing work to date.

5.5.2 It is likely that a larger price increase will be needed in September 2018 to match inflation over two years, unless the council chooses to continue to subsidise meal prices

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

5.6.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; foster good relations between people from different groups.

5.6.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into

day to day business and to keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

5.6.3 There are no identified equality implications, however maintaining the school meal price at current levels will ensure that school meals remain affordable for families within the Borough.

5.7 Consultation and Engagement

5.7.1 None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Policy and Resources Committee 27th June 2017 *Business Planning 2017-2020*