

SCHOOLS FORUM

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Lead Officer	Ian Crook, Business Services Manager, Property Services
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Forum asked to decide / steer / be informed	To recommend to the Cabinet member the amount of the increase, if any, in the price of primary school meals from 1 September 2010
Time Needed	

Introduction

This report puts forward options for an increase in the price of primary school meals from 1 September 2010.

Recommendation

That the Schools Forum agrees a recommendation to the Cabinet member on the price of primary school meals from 1 September 2010.

Price of Primary School Meals

1. School meals increased in price by 2.7% from £1.85 to £1.90 in September 2010.
2. Since then demand for paid meals has increased by 4% (144 per day). Demand for free school meals has risen by 13% (116 per day). Total demand has risen by 6% to nearly 4,500 meals per day.
3. Demand for school meals dropped sharply in 2005-6, since when it has slowly crept back up and it is now back at the 2005-6 level.
4. Options for price increases are shown in the table below.

Increase per meal	% increase	Price	Additional income 2010-11	Additional income 2011-12
£0.00	0%	£1.90	£0	£0
£0.05	2.6%	£1.95	£20,000	£31,000
£0.10	5.2%	£2.00	£40,000	£62,000
£0.15	7.9%	£2.05	£60,000	£93,000

5. A 5 pence increase represents an additional cost of £9.50 a year for each child buying a meal every day. This would be broadly in line with inflation.
6. The increase in the number of free school meals that are now being provided probably demonstrates the impact of the economic recession. Conversely, increased demand for paid meals suggests that a moderate price increase may not be a serious discouragement to paying for meals.

7. The School Food Trust 2009 survey shows the following national and regional information.

	England average 2008-9	South west average 2008-9	B&NES 2008-9	B&NES 2009-10
Meals take-up % (primary)	39.3%	34.8%	35.7%*	38.6%*
Price per meal (primary)	£1.77	£1.87	£1.85	£1.85 / £1.90
Meals take-up % (secondary)	35.0%	26.2%	31.2%	Not known

*the primary meals take-up figure for B&NES excludes the two primary schools that do not have a hot meals service. This figure would be 34.4% in 2008-9 if those schools were included.

8. The average cost of a primary school meal (kitchen staff and ingredients only) in 2009-10 was £2.04. The total average cost including service and Council overheads was £2.59 per meal. These costs were affected by some irregular factors including high equipment replacement costs and volatile food prices and the projection for 2010-11 suggests that the unit cost will be a few pence lower than this.
9. You are asked to recommend the increase, if any, in the price of primary school meals from 1 September 2010.