

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date of Decision:	18 January 2017
Decision Title:	School Meal Prices
Decision Reference:	8067
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to provide the information required by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services to agree an extraordinary increase in the price of school meals.

2. Background information

- 2.1. Each year the Executive Lead Member is asked to review the price of free school meals (it does not need to be so but in Hampshire this has been taken as the price of a school meal) and consider if an increase should be applied.
- 2.2. Historically, Hampshire has applied the same price to paid meals in primary and secondary schools.
- 2.3. In Hampshire, the County Council does not subsidise the cost of school meals.
- 2.4. The school meals service provides healthy meals. Good nutrition plays a vital role in enabling pupils to perform well in school. The service also encourages the healthy eating habits which are essential to combat child obesity; the latest figures indicate that 1 in 3 children are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school. All HC3S school dinners are served with vegetables or salad sourced from local south coast growers. By sourcing local ingredients wherever possible the service supports the local economic development agenda.
- 2.5. This emphasis on quality ensures that the meals provided by H3CS meet the new standards introduced by Department for Education on January 1st 2014, mandatory for local authority schools, which stipulate that meals include
 - one or more portions of vegetables or salad as an accompaniment every day

- at least three different fruits and three different vegetables each week
- an emphasis on wholegrain foods in place of refined carbohydrates
- an emphasis on making water the drink of choice
- limiting fruit juice portions to quarter pints (150ml)
- restricting the amount of added sugars or honey in other drinks to 5%
- no more than two portions a week of food that has been deep-fried, batter-coated or breadcrumb-coated
- no more than two portions of food that include pastry each week
- a portion of milk (lower fat and lactose reduced) to be made available once a day
- one or more portions of vegetables or salad as an accompaniment every day
- at least three different fruits and three different vegetables each week

2.6. **Quality** - The quality of the ingredients and of the meals provided by H3CS have been recognised by several national awards over a number of years:

- 2015 Lead Association for Catering in Education (LACA) Business of the Year Award
- 2014 and retained in 2015 Hyperactive Children's Support Group Award for reduced additives
- 2014 inaugural FreeFrom Eating Out Award in the Schools, Colleges and Universities section for the quality of the Primary Menu - the policy of providing all pupils with freshly made gluten free sausages and fishfingers so that every pupil can eat the same meal was particularly commented upon *'For taking the 'special' out of children's special diets by letting everyone eat 'freefrom'.*
- 2013 and retained since, "Good Pig" award from Compassion in World Farming for the use of pork and pork products that meet strict animal welfare criteria, using exclusively pigs that are reared in better living conditions so that they have a longer and healthier lifespan.
- 2011 and retained since, Good Chicken from Compassion in World Farming
- 2008, and retained since, Good Egg from Compassion in World Farming for the use of local free-range eggs.

3. Performance in 2015/16

- 3.1. In the year to August 2016 HC3S provided 11,452,746 meals in Hampshire schools which is a 2.9% increase on the previous year.
- 3.2. The early indications are that this high level is being maintained in primary schools with 62010 meals provided in October compared to 61834 in October 2015 and 59973 in October 2014.
- 3.4. The impact of academy programme has had little or no impact as the majority of meals are delivered to primary schools.

4. Future price of school meals

- 4.1. A programme of planned price changes was agreed in January 2016, see table below, which sought to cover the introduction of the Living Wage, allow HC3S to maintain the high quality of meals and generate sufficient income to reinvest in kitchens and equipment.

2015	£2.00
2016	£2.10
2017	£2.10
2018	£2.20
2019	£2.20
2020	£2.30

- 4.2 This agreed plan has since been superseded by events. Following the unexpected 20% reduction in the value of the pound during 2016, projections of food inflation have been received from suppliers and via other local authorities of between 4% and 8% in 2017. If the forecasts prove to be correct the additional cost to HC3S will be between £572K and £1.1m. It is now necessary to bring forward the increase to £2.20, planned for 2018, to 2017 in order to maintain the quality and high percentage of local produce on menus in schools.

- 4.3 Despite the work carried out for the introduction of Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) there are still a large number of schools needing catering equipment replacement and improvement. HC3S is working with Property on a schedule of ventilation/extraction works which will enable improvements to be made, however revenue funding is needed to replace equipment which is no longer fit for purpose. The expectation now is that we will need further 10p rises in 2018 and 2019

- 4.6 As a comparison, meal prices elsewhere are:

- Hertfordshire are at £2.25 and given the NLW increases and projected food inflation, are considering an increase from April.
- Cambridge will be staying at £2.25 until September 2017.
- Surrey – holding current meal price at £2.20 through to September 2017.
- Nottinghamshire – schools are setting their own meal prices and range from £2.00 to £2.25 (anticipate rising to £2.30 from April).
- Southampton - £2.00 until April 2017
- Portsmouth - £2.05

4.7 The suggested increase from H3CS is 5p, taking the price to £2.15 from April 2017.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services agrees that the price of school meals increases by £0.05 to £2.15 from April 2017.
- 5.2. That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services notes the pressure on HC3S and approves in principle the pattern of school meals price increases indicated in section 4.3.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	Yes
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	Yes
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	No
Corporate Business plan link number (if appropriate):	
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Corporate Strategy but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

3. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- No impact

- **Impact on Crime and Disorder:**
- No impact

- **Climate Change:**
- How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?
No impact
- How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?
No impact