

Agenda



Delegated Decisions - Deputy Leader/Education and Early Years

Date: Tuesday, 19 September 2023

To: Councillor D Davies

Item

Wards Affected

1 School Meals Catering Contract (Pages 3 - 24)

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Report

Cabinet Member Education and Early Years

Part 1

Date: 5 October 2023

Subject **School Meals Catering Contract**

Purpose To seek the Cabinet Member's approval to increase the amount paid to Chartwells for eligible Free School Meals (FSM) and Universal Provision Free School Meals (UPFSM).

To seek the Cabinet Members approval to increase the charge to pupils who are 11 years and over and not eligible for FSM.

Author Sally Jenkins

Ward All

Summary The Council has a single contract with Chartwells for the delivery of a school meals catering service across all school sites, with the exception of, Caerleon Comprehensive School and Bassaleg High School. Newport High School are currently in negotiations to join the Chartwells contract.

The contract also covers the provision of breakfast in the primary schools.

Within the terms and conditions of the contract, Chartwells is permitted to apply for an annual increase to the school meal prices and they have applied for an increase to commence September 2023. The current situation of food price inflation and increasing employment costs cited as the rationale for the request.

This report seeks approval to increase prices of school meals for eFSM (including Universal Provision Free School Meals (UPFSM)) and customer paid meals in Secondary Schools.

Proposal To implement the report.

Action by Sarah Morgan

Timetable Proposed implementation date September 2023

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Head of Law and Regulation – Monitoring Officer
- Head of Finance – Chief Finance Officer
- Head of People, Policy & Transformation
- Head of Education

Signed

Background

The cost of providing an eligible Free School Meal (eFSM) in both primary and secondary schools is met by the local authority from an existing revenue budget. The Universal provision Free School Meal (UPFSM) roll out from September in Newport is currently funded by a Welsh Government Grant and will offer all primary aged pupils from Reception to Year 6 a free school meal.

The proposed uplift in cost payable to Chartwells can be absorbed by the additional income received from the UPFSM grant in 23/24. However, if the unit rate provided by the Welsh Government is reduced or uptake in eFSM increases, this will create a pressure on the eFSM budget and Education will need to be manage this from existing resources.

Chartwells has requested an increase of 13.4% to FSM prices for primary and eligible secondary pupils from 1 September 2023. This is the money paid to Chartwell for the provision of the meal. The increase will equally apply to Universal Provision Free School Meals for all primary pupils.

Chartwells cite the continuing increases in the costs of food and the cost of employment. Chartwells have confirmed that this proposed increase is for the 2023/24 academic year.

The primary and secondary schools operate in slightly different ways. In primary schools the child receives a set meal. In secondary schools the pupils are older and have more freedom to spend their money, selecting food from a menu. Pupils have the opportunity to choose the food they want throughout the day. There is not a set meal cost as such.

The 13.4% increase is an average uplift so in secondary schools some individual products will increase by more some less. This will have the greatest impact for secondary pupils.

For primary schools Chartwells currently receive £2.40 this will increase to £2.70 per meal. Secondary costs will increase from £2.60 to £2.95.

All meals and food items sold must be in accordance with The Healthy Eating in Schools (Nutritional Standards and Requirements) (Wales) Regulations 2014.

Financial Summary

• Free School Meals

As part of the original MTRP for 23/24, an inflationary increase on the unit cost of 10% was used to determine the 23/24 budget requirement. The table below shows the impact of the price increase being higher than anticipated.

	Budgeted Meal Price Sept 23	Projected eFSM numbers Sept 23 to Mar 24	Budget Sept 23 to March 24	Proposed Meal Price Sept 23	Projected eFSM numbers Sept 23 to Mar 24	Revised Budget Sept 23 to March 24	Variance
Primary	2.64	307,692	812,307	2.70	307,692	830,768	18,462
Secondary	2.86	163,170	466,666	2.95	163,170	481,352	14,685
Special	2.86	14,238	40,721	2.95	14,238	42,002	1,281
Total		485,100	1,319,694		485,100	1,354,122	34,428

This "additional" 3.4% will cost the authority just over £34k for the period September 23 - March 24 (£59k on a full year basis) and whilst this pressure can be absorbed in 23/24, any significant increases in uptake or further price rises beyond 23/24 may result in a further pressure on the catering budgets which will need to be managed from existing resources. If this is not possible, a pressure will need to be

included within the councils medium term financial plan in future years however this would be subject to cabinet approval.

Paid Meals

The current subsidy for paying pupils within primary schools will no longer be required from September 2023 as the universal rollout of school meals to all primary pupils will mean that all school meals are free.

A subsidy is not required in the secondary schools as it operates as a commercial service and a term in the contract places the responsibility on the contractor to provide an offer which appeals to pupils so uptake remains the same or increases, eliminating any subsidy payable by the Council.

Risks

Risk	Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L)	Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L)	What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or mitigate its effect?	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
An increase in the prices could result in a reduced meal uptake across the City in secondary schools	High	Low	The risk lies with the Contractor. Chartwells need to place a greater focus on the quality of provision to maintain custom and sales	Education & Chartwells
Not increasing school meal costs may result in Chartwells terminating the contract as the service will not be viable and due to the market no other providers will bid for it	High	Medium	Agreeing to the full increase will ensure that Chartwells' operating costs are covered, and the service is viable	The Council

Options Available

Option 1:

To accept the proposed increase for eFSM including universal provision free school meals, for both primary, and secondary schools and paying pupils within the secondary schools.

Option 2: To not accept the proposed increase for FSMs. The risk of not accepting could possibly result in Chartwells giving notice as the contract would no longer be viable and the current state of the market may mean that no other providers will bid resulting in there being no catering provision. Chartwells were the only bidder in the last contract round.

Preferred Option and Why

The preferred option is **Option 1**. Although the proposed FSM increase for primary and secondary schools is more than the anticipated increase of 10%, the additional increase can be absorbed by the current catering budget until March 2024. Due to the commercial nature of the secondary school

provision, the proposed increase to paying pupils will be spread across the school menu thus pupils will only see a minimal reduction in the money they have to spend.

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

The factors leading up to the proposed price increases are well known. It is acknowledged that the anticipated increase from April 2023 in relation to the secondary sector was delayed at the request of the local authority due to the cost of living crisis, therefore under these circumstances, officers are recommending an increase from September 2023 which is above that permitted under the contract terms. The Cabinet Member needs to satisfy themselves that all avenues of negotiation have taken place and under the circumstances; approval of an increase over and above the Council's contractual obligation is reasonable.

The report confirms that the proposed increase is affordable within the current resources available in the current 2023/24 financial year, which comprise the core FSM budget and the UPFSM grant funding. This is due to the unit rate the local authority can claim for a UPFSM being in excess of the cost of a meal in the primary sector. However, it must be noted that this unit rate is currently under review by WG and, as such, if it is reduced, or actual UPFSM take up is less than anticipated, this will reduce the funding available to offset the increase on the core FSM budget.

As well as the in-year risk, there is also a risk that a recurring pressure is placed upon the FSM budget if the UPFSM rate decreases. If that is the case, it would be necessary for the Education service to take steps to manage this from within their wider budget. If that is not possible, this would become a pressure upon the Council's medium term financial plan and would need to be funded as part of the wider strategy to set a balanced revenue budget each year.

It should also be noted that whilst the secondary increase has been deemed minimal, as the contractor is proposing to spread the cost across their menu, for those families unable to meet the increased cost, this will result in less choice for those pupils.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

The Council has a discretion when fixing the price of school meals provided in accordance with its duties under Section 512 of the Education Act. The Education Authority is required to charge for all non-free school meals, but the price of the meal is a matter for the Council to determine. In the case of secondary schools with delegated budgets, this duty in relation to the provision and pricing of school meals is delegated to each Governing Body. However, all of those secondary schools who have opted-in to the single catering contract with Chartwells have agreed that the price of meals will continue to be fixed by the Council. In accordance with the current school meals contract with Chartwells, the contractor is entitled to request an index-linked annual price increase in line with any increases in the costs of labour and food supplies. The proposed increase for both primary and secondary school meals to £2.72 and £2.95 respectively is considered to be reasonable, albeit higher than the contractor's index-linked cost increases that they are they contractually entitled to in accordance with the indexation Clauses contained within the schools catering contract. However, were the Council to refuse the requested price increases, there is a risk of the contract being no longer commercially viable for the contractor, who would be entitled to serve notice to terminate the contract. Alternative providers are limited. The only discretion that the Council has is whether or not to pass on these increases to the paying parents for the primary school meals or whether these increases should be subsidised, in whole or part. There is no requirement for subsidy of the paid meals in secondary schools as there is no set meal and the contractors are able to operate the service on a commercial basis, to recover their costs. The recommended option is to agree to the proposed price increases for primary and secondary school meals and note that there will no longer be a requirement for the Council to subsidise the paid-for primary school meals after September 2023 due to the national roll-out of free school meals. Therefore, the proposed increase can be absorbed by the existing catering budget until March 2024. This is considered to be reasonable and in accordance with the Council's public sector equalities and socio-economic duties under the Equality Act. A full FEIA is has been completed and can be provided on request. The impact of the increases for parents in primary schools will be reduced as a result of the Welsh Government roll-out of its Universal Primary Free School Meals scheme in September 2023.

Comments of Head of People, Policy and Transformation

In order to sustain the school meals service in its current form, inflationary costs necessitate an increase in the price for school meals. Free School Meals have long been regarded as a policy tool for addressing poverty and reducing inequalities between families with children. Whilst the rollout of Universal Free School Meals within primary schools will remove any payment for all primary pupils from September 2023, avoiding impacts within this sector, for secondary schools there will be a financial impact from the price rise on families who are not eligible for free school meals. A Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to consider the potential implications for protected groups and steps have been taken to mitigate the impacts for paying pupils.

There are no direct human resources implications arising from this report

Comments of Head of Education

Whilst the reasons for Chartwells requesting this increase are understood, and the proposal is affordable currently as there is sufficient funding available to cover the additional costs that will be incurred between September 2023 and March 2024, it is difficult to confirm with some certainty what the impact will be on the central Education budget from April 2024, and how any pressures will be absorbed. It is also noted that although the proposed primary price remains lower than the value per meal served that can be claimed from Welsh Government for the delivery of Universal Primary Free School Meals, this will result in a reduced amount of grant income received by the Council to support the administration of this scheme.

It is acknowledged that the full rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals across the primary sector will protect some families from the impact of proposed increase; however this will not be the same position in the secondary sector where paying pupils will be directly impacted by the price increase.

Comments of Non-Executive Members

Councillor Kellaway:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I would support the preferred option 1 as I believe in the principle of FSM, and benefitted myself from the scheme, it's important to maintain it. The worldwide pressures on cost of food means anyone / contractor will need to increase their costs or risk failure to the provision.

A meeting was requested by Councillor James during the All-Member Consultation:

Present: Councillor D Davies (Cabinet Member for Education and Early Years), S Jenkins (Strategic Director: Social Services), S Morgan (Chief Education Officer), A Turner (Programme Manager), A Jenkins (Governance Team Leader), C Williams (Executive Assistant)

Councillor James referred to the FEIA which stated that Chartwells was the only company that supplied a contract for school meals.

For context, the Cabinet Member, Strategic Director, and Chief Education Officer explained this was correct.

Cllr James asked if there had been negotiations with Chartwells around their decision to increase school meal prices?

The Strategic Director said yes there had been extensive negotiations via Council Officers and the Contract Board (made up of Headteachers and School Business Managers). However, Chartwells could clearly evidence the significant rise in food costs, energy costs and staffing pay rises.

Councillor James noted that the FEIA mentioned the impact on what children could spend and the choice they may have had.

The Chief Education Officer said that she believed that the Contract Board had requested that the price rises should be spread around the school menu's in secondary school, so that one type of food (which may have had significant rises in costs) was not disproportionately affected. It was clear that for a proportion of secondary aged pupils, price increases may result in them purchasing less food.

Cllr James asked if children and young people had had the opportunity to have a view on the school meals service and if dietary considerations had been taken into account?

The Chief Education Officer explained that there is a School Catering Client Officer in the Local Authority.

Part of the School Catering Client Officers role is to ensure pupil voices are heard. Headteachers and School Business Managers on the Contract Board also feed in pupil voice into their discussions and monitoring of the contract. Sarah Morgan said that the School Meals Contract Officer is in school most of the week looking at this.

Also, dietician time is part of the Chartwells contract. Their function is to support pupils dietary needs.

Councillor James referred to the socio-economic section of the report where it mentioned that there would be no impact on health. Councillor James asked if the mental health of pupils been considered.

The Chief Education Officer explained the reason that this had not been considered as 'high impact'. There are a whole range of issues which can affect a person's mental health, suggesting that a rise in school meal prices would be a significant factor would be disproportionate.

Councillor James referred to the comments of the Head of People, Policy, and Transformation, where it said that steps had been taken to mitigate impact of children, the councillor felt that this was misleading.

The Chief Education Officer explained that this was linked back to the previous year when the Local Authority was able to defer the price increase for parents.

Cllr James asked what would happen if secondary meal uptake reduced?

The Chief Education Officer said that because this is a business model, Chartwells would be looking for immediate change to ensure they were providing their clients with what they preferred. If FSM uptake reduced, the local authority would also be looking at information for families on how they access a Free School Meal.

Councillor James referred to FEIA being available on request, rather than being part of the report.

The Chief Education apologised for the delay and said that it was indeed a council error not to have this published on the NCC website at the same time as the report and decision schedule.

Cllr James noted that the date of the FEIA had changed.

Angela Turner noted that this had changed, noting that any FEIA is a dynamic and moving document.

Cllr James asked if the Cabinet Member had used the FEIA model to determine her report?

Cllr Davies said yes this was the case. The Chief Education Officer said that there had been many Cabinet Member briefings over months to determine the report completion and that fairness and equality and the potential impact on groups was a consistent consideration.

Councillor James asked on behalf of residents if Chartwells had already raised their prices.

Sarah Morgan said this would be looked into.

Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment:

- **Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Socio-economic Duty**
- **Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011**

The council has a number of legislative responsibilities to assess the impact of any strategic decision, proposal or policy on people that may experience disadvantage or inequality. Any proposal / policy / decision submitted to a Cabinet Member, Cabinet or Council should have been subject to a Fairness and Equality Impact Assessment (FEIA) which will allow you to consider all relevant impacts.

An FEIA has been completed and a copy can be provided on request

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Long Term - There is a danger if the proposed increases were not approved, that the contractor for the school meals catering contract in Newport may terminate the contract as it is no longer sustainable resulting in there being no service at all until a new contractor could be appointed which will take up to 9 months.

Prevention - This decision is not preventative, but the Council have no ability to be able to impact the root cause of the issue (increases in global food and fuel prices, central government increases to National Living wage and national insurance contributions) and so we have to act at this level.

Integration - There are no specific contributions to Wales Well-being Goals or Newport City Council's Well-being Objectives.

Collaboration - There are no specific contributions to collaboration represented by this proposal outside of those to be found in the provision of school meals more generally.

Involvement - The proposed increases in school meals are informed by insight from initial consultation undertaken with primary and secondary school representatives at the School Meals Catering Board.

Equality Act 2010

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed increase in school meals will positively or negatively impact people who share any protected characteristics

Socio-economic Duty

The proposed increase in school meal prices is anticipated to potentially increase inequalities of outcome for children living in poverty likely to experience socio-economic disadvantage as their household does not meet the criteria for FSM. However, the rollout of the UFSM within primary schools will remove any payment required for all primary pupils from September 2023. In secondary schools, as the service is commercial, the contractor will need to ensure that the increases vary across all food and drink products, so the impact is minimal to all pupils.

Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposed increase in school meals will positively or negatively impact people who speak Welsh as a first or second language.

Background Papers

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – School Meal Price Increase Cabinet Report 2022-2023



School Meal Price
Increase Cabinet Re

Dated: 4 October 2023

Fairness and Equalities Impact Assessment (FEIA)

This is an integrated Impact Assessment which aims to ensure Newport City Council makes decisions which are fair, take account of relevant evidence, and seek to secure the best outcomes for our communities. **An FEIA should be used to inform the first steps of decision-making, at concept stage, not when a decision is already made, or at the point when it cannot be influenced.** This impact assessment considers our legislative responsibilities under:

- The Equality Act (2010), including the Socio-economic Duty
- The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)
- The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011)

The FEIA process is not intended to prevent decisions being made, but to ensure we have considered their potential impact. An FEIA also helps us to focus on how we can reduce any negative impacts, and provides us with evidence that we have met our legal duties.

For support to complete your FEIA, please contact the [Equalities Team](#)

What do we mean by Fairness?

The Newport Fairness Commission is an independent body which advises the council on the best use of resources and powers to achieve the fairest outcomes for local people. The Fairness Commission has established four **Principles of Fairness** which should be considered as part of any decisions that the council make – the questions below are useful to reflect on before you start your FEIA.

Equity	Are people being treated in a consistent way, whilst acknowledging their differences (for example, need, barriers to accessing services)?
	Will the gap between those with more, and those with less be reduced?
	Have the interests of different groups affected (including minority or disadvantaged communities) been taken into account?
Priority	Have the needs of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable across the city been given priority?
	Have you considered possible indirect consequences for minority/disadvantaged communities when other priorities are directing decisions?
Inclusion	Will the voices of all those affected by your decision be heard?
	Are people able to participate in and shape a service, as well as receiving it?
	Have you considered the impact of your decision on the relationship between communities, and the spaces they share?
Communication	Are decisions being made transparently and consistently?
	How will decisions be communicated to people who are affected in a clear way, with the opportunity for feedback?

Part 1: Identification

Name of person completing the FEIA	Joanne James
Role of person completing the FEIA	Senior Procurement Officer
Date of completion	September 2023
Head of Service who has approved this FEIA	Sarah Morgan, Head of Education

1. What is being assessed? *(Please double click on the relevant box(es) (X) and select 'checked' as appropriate)*

- New or revised policies, practices or procedures (which modify service delivery or employment practices)
- Service review or re-organisation proposals which affect the community and/or staff
- Efficiency or saving proposals
- Setting budget allocations for new financial year and strategic financial planning
- Decisions affecting service users, employees or the wider community including (de)commissioning or revising services
- New project proposals affecting staff, communities or access to the built environment
- Public events
- Local implementation of National Strategy/Plans/Legislation
- Strategic directive and intent, including those developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Service Boards
- Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans)
- Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy)
- Major procurement and commissioning decisions
- Decisions that affect the ability (including external partners) to offer Welsh language opportunities and services
- Other *please explain in the box below:*

Proposal to increase to School Meal prices for Free School Meals (FSM) and paying pupils as from September 2023.

2. Please describe the overall aims, objectives and intended outcomes of your decision

The School Meals Catering Contract allows the contractor to request an increase to the school meal price in primary and the FSM allowance in secondary on an annual basis. Chartwells, the contractor, has requested an increase from September 2023 due to the inflationary increases currently being experienced in both prices and wage levels. The aim is to increase school meal prices for all pupils, both FSM and paid, so the service is sustainable and to ensure that it continues.

3. Who are the main stakeholders who may be impacted by your decision and what data do you hold on them? Consider communities of place (people who live in the same geographic area) and communities of interest (people who share particular characteristics but may live in different geographic areas). Stakeholders may include residents, local businesses, community groups, staff or partners.

The main stakeholders who may be impacted by the proposed increase to School Meal prices are:

- Pupils in schools in Newport and their parents or guardians
- People living in households containing school-age children
- Schools within the local authority
- The School Meals Catering Board
- Newport City Council, particularly the Contracts and Commissioning Team

Information about Newport's population can be found here:

[Community Wellbeing Profile - Newport 2021](#)

Part 2: Engagement

When completing this section, you need to consider whether you have sufficient information about the views and experiences of people who your decision will impact upon. If you don't, you may need to undertake a period of engagement/consultation before continuing. An FEIA is a live document, so can be updated with consultation findings, and amended as needed during the decision-making process.

The council has a duty to consult and engage with people who may experience inequalities as a result of your decision. This includes people **who share Protected Characteristics** (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and people who **have lived experience of socio-economic disadvantage**. The council's Youth Promise also requires us to ensure **all young people in Newport are listened to and included in decisions affecting them**.

The council also has a duty to ensure that any consultation is available bilingually (in Welsh as well as English), and you may like to consider any other community languages that are spoken by people who may be impacted by your decision. Below are some questions that should be included in any public consultation relating to a decision which may impact on the use of Welsh language in Newport:

1. Do you believe that the proposed decision/policy will have a positive or negative effect on opportunities to use the Welsh language?
2. If you think it will have a negative effect, what steps could we take to lessen or remove this and improve positive effects?
3. Do you believe that the proposed decision/policy will treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language?

1. How have you engaged with people who may be affected by your decision (the stakeholders you have identified)?

Initial consultation was undertaken with primary and secondary school representatives at the School Meals Catering Board. The outcome of these meetings was the proposed increase in school meal prices for all pupils with a request that the proposed increase for secondary schools for a set meal of £2.95.

Discussions included consideration of the impact on all pupils.

2. What do you know about the views or experiences of people who may be affected by your decision?

The proposed increases for school meals will affect all those who currently receive them, FSM or paid within the secondary sector. The roll out of Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM) for Reception and KS1 from September 2022 and for KS2 from September 2023 removes any increase to paying parents within primary schools. The increase for FSM pupils will be absorbed by the school meal catering budget.

In secondary schools as the service is commercial, pupils can access food at breakfast, mid-morning break and lunchtime. There are differing menus for each, and the increases will be spread across the food products and drinks available, with some products being swapped for cheaper alternatives. The increases will be variable, and pupils should not see a dramatic change in what they are able to spend as it is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that the menus are attractive, so uptake does not decrease. FSM pupils will see an increase in their allowance which will offset the increases. However, those pupils who pay, particularly from lower income households, may see a reduction of products that they can buy but it is Chartwell's responsibility to ensure that the increases across the product range have minimal impact.

Part 3: Assessment

This section requires you to assess the potential impact of your decision on a range of groups who may experience specific disadvantages. Your assessment should be supported by evidence – either from your own engagement/consultation, similar or previous engagement, what you already know about the people who access your service, or from local and national sources of information.

Useful documents which set out information about how communities are impacted by inequalities include [EHRC – Is Wales Fairer?](#) and the council’s [COVID-19 Community Impact Assessment](#). Your decision may have both positive and negative impacts – if this is the case, please place a cross in both boxes.

1. Impact on people that share Protected Characteristics

[Protected Characteristics](#) are defined under the Equality Act 2010, and describe groups of people who are protected from discrimination, either in the workplace, or through the provision of goods and services. The council must consider how decisions may impact on people differently because of a protected characteristic, and how any negative impact could be reduced. National guidance on assessing equality impacts and the Public Sector Equality Duty can be found [here](#). You can also access further advice and examples of positive and negative impacts [here](#).

Protected characteristic	Impact:			<p>Provide further details about the nature of the impact in the sections below, considering the Public Sector Equality Duty that the council has to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promote equal opportunity across different groups Promote community cohesion Help eliminate unlawful discrimination/ harassment/ victimisation
	Positive	Negative	Neither	
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposed increase in school meals will potentially have a negative impact on children and young people of secondary school age, particularly those from lower income households who aren't eligible for FSM.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence that suggests the proposed increase will have a disproportionate impact on people that share this Protected Characteristic.
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence that suggests the proposed increase will have a disproportionate impact on people that share this Protected Characteristic.

Protected characteristic	Impact:			<p>Provide further details about the nature of the impact in the sections below, considering the Public Sector Equality Duty that the council has to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promote equal opportunity across different groups 2. Promote community cohesion 3. Help eliminate unlawful discrimination/ harassment/ victimisation
	Positive	Negative	Neither	
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence that suggests the proposed increase will have a disproportionate impact on people that share this Protected Characteristic.
Pregnancy or maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence that suggests the proposed increase will have a disproportionate impact on people that share this Protected Characteristic.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence that suggests the proposed increase will have a disproportionate impact on people that share this Protected Characteristic.
Religion or Belief or non-belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence that suggests the proposed increase will have a disproportionate impact on people that share this Protected Characteristic.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence that suggests the proposed increase will have a disproportionate impact on people that share this Protected Characteristic.
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence that suggests the proposed increase will have a disproportionate impact on people that share this Protected Characteristic.

2. Impact on Welsh Language

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure specifies that for all policy decisions, the council must consider the effects (both positive and negative) on the Welsh language. For further guidance on Welsh language considerations see [here](#).






	Impact:			
	Positive	Negative	Neither	
Welsh Language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There is no evidence that suggests the proposed increase will have a disproportionate impact on people that share this Protected Characteristic.

1. Please describe how you have ensured your engagement has considered the view of Welsh speakers in Newport and the impact of your decision on the Welsh language.

n/a

3. The Sustainable Development Principle

The Well-being of Future Generations Act puts in place a sustainable development principle which helps organisations consider the impact they could have on people living in Wales in the future, and ensure they are focused on tackling long-term challenges. Below, consider how your decision promotes, advances, or contradicts the [5 ways of working](#) which underpin the sustainable development principle. You can access further guidance on considering the sustainable development principle [here](#).

<p>Long term</p> 	<p><i>The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs.</i></p>	<p>There is a danger if the proposed increases were not approved, that the contractor for the school meals catering contract in Newport may terminate the contract as it is no longer sustainable resulting in there being no service at all until a new contractor could be appointed which will take up to 9 months.</p>
<p>Prevention</p> 	<p><i>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</i></p>	<p>This decision is not preventative, but the Council have no ability to be able to impact the root cause of the issue (increases in global food and fuel prices, central government increases to National Living wage and national insurance contributions) and so we have to act at this level.</p>
<p>Integration</p> 	<p><i>Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.</i></p>	<p>There are no specific contributions to Wales Well-being Goals or Newport City Council's Well-being Objectives.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p> 	<p><i>Working together to deliver objectives.</i></p>	<p>There are no specific contributions to collaboration represented by this proposal outside of those to be found in the provision of school meals more generally.</p>
<p>Involvement</p> 	<p><i>Involving those with an interest and seeking their view - ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area.</i></p>	<p>The proposed increases in school meals are informed by insight from initial consultation undertaken with primary and secondary school representatives at the School Meals Catering Board.</p>

4. Socio-economic Duty

The [Socio-economic Duty](#) is set out in the Equality Act 2010, and requires the council, when making strategic decisions, to pay due regard to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome that result from socio-economic disadvantage. Inequalities of outcome are felt most acutely in areas such as health, education, work, living standards, justice and personal security, and participation.

A 'strategic decision' is defined by Welsh Government as a decision **which affects how the council fulfils its statutory purpose over a significant period of time and does not include routine 'day to day' decisions.** Strategic decisions include:

- Corporate plans
- Setting wellbeing, equality and other strategic objectives
- Changes to, or development of public services
- Strategic financial planning
- Strategic policy development

If you do not think your decision meets this definition, and you do not plan on carrying out a Socio-economic Duty Assessment in this section, please provide your rationale below. Any decision which is presented to a Cabinet Member, at Cabinet or Council will be viewed as a strategic decision.

If your decision does meet the definition, please consider the impact of your decision on the socio-economically disadvantaged groups, and areas of inequality that may arise from socio-economic disadvantage contained in the matrix below. The groups listed are not exhaustive and you should consider any additional groups relevant to your decision who may experience socio-economic disadvantage in the following ways:

- **Low Income/Income Poverty** - cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.
- **Low and/or no Wealth** - enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future
- **Material Deprivation** - unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)
- **Area Deprivation** - where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport)
- Socio-economic Background – for example, parents' education, employment and income

Indicate a positive or negative impact, or both where they apply, and the severity of this impact by coding the sections of the grid based on the below. *If there is no/neutral impact, please leave blank.*

Negative Impact		Positive Impact	
N1	Negative impact – mild	P1	Positive impact – mild
N2	Negative impact – moderate	P2	Positive impact – moderate
N3	Negative impact – significant	P3	Positive impact – significant
N4	Potential for negative impact (but unsure)	P4	Potential for positive impact (but unsure)

Areas of inequality that may arise from socio-economic disadvantage – definitions							
Education :The capability to be knowledgeable, to understand and reason, and to have the skills and opportunity to participate in the labour market and in society							
Work : The capability to work in just and favourable conditions, to have the value of your work recognised, even if unpaid, to not be prevented from working and to be free from slavery, forced labour and other forms of exploitation							
Living Standards : The capability to enjoy a comfortable standard of living, in appropriate housing, with independence and security, and to be cared for and supported when necessary.							
Justice, Personal Security and Community Safety : The capability to avoid premature mortality, live in security, and knowing you will be protected and treated fairly by the law							
Health : The capability to be healthy, physically and mentally, being free in matters of sexual relationships and reproduction, and having autonomy over care and treatment and being cared for in the final stages of your life							
Participation : The capability to participate in decision making and in communities, access services, know your privacy will be respected, and express yourself							
Groups	Areas of inequality						
	Living Standards	Work	Health	Education	Justice and community safety	Participation	Physical Environment
Children living in poverty	N4			N4			
Low income households without dependent children							
Unemployed young people							
Long term unemployed							
Homeless households							
Refugees, migrants and asylum seekers							
Deprived neighbourhoods - WIMD rank in 10% most deprived LSOA							
People on Universal Credit / income related benefits							

Adults with no qualifications or low qualifications							
People living in low quality housing or in Houses of Multiple Occupation							

1. What evidence do you have about socioeconomic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to this decision?

The proposed increase in school meal prices is anticipated to potentially increase inequalities of outcome for secondary school children living in poverty likely to experience socio-economic disadvantage if their household does not meet the criteria for FSM.

This proposed increase from September 2023 will increase potential inequalities of outcome of living standards and education as all secondary school children living in poverty who are not eligible for FSM will be affected. In secondary schools, as the service is commercial, the contractor will need to ensure that the increases vary across all food and drink products, so the impact is minimal to all pupils.

2. Please describe how you have ensured your engagement has considered the views of people living in Newport who are affected by socio-economic disadvantage.

The school meals contract Board provide governance for the school meals contract. This Board has representatives from primary and secondary schools both teaching and non-teaching staff. The board facilitates discussions regarding changes to the contract including operational practice, pricing, quality etc.

The initial consultation for this year's increase was undertaken with primary and secondary school representatives at the School Meals Catering Board. The outcome of these meetings was the proposed increase in school meal prices for all pupils with a request that the proposed increase for secondary schools for a set meal of £2.95.

Discussions included the consideration of children living in Newport who are affected by socio-economic disadvantage.

3. Does this decision contribute to a cumulative impact?

A. Approval may have a cumulative impact for low-income households for children that are in secondary schools not accessing FSMs or any benefits.

As part of our FEIA process, we will continue to monitor the impact of this proposal, including any potential impacts identified at this stage, actual impacts if implemented and the potential cumulative impact. This document will be reviewed and may be updated to reflect any changes.

Part 3: Actions and Outcomes

Considering any negative impacts that you have identified, indicate below how you will reduce these, increase the potential for positive impacts, and how you will monitor those impacts. Further guidance on how to complete your action plan can be found [here](#).

IMPACT ON PEOPLE THAT SHARE PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS			
Summary of impact	Action to reduce negative impact / opportunities to increase positive impacts	How this impact will be monitored	Owner
The proposed increase in school meal prices will potentially have a negative impact on children and young people of secondary school age, particularly those from lower income households who aren't eligible for FSM.	In secondary schools as the service is commercial, pupils can access food at breakfast, mid-morning break and lunchtime. There are differing menus for each, and the increases will be spread across the food products and drinks available, with some products being swapped for cheaper alternatives. The increases will be variable, and pupils should not see a dramatic change in what they are able to spend as it is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that the menus are attractive, so uptake does not decrease. FSM pupils will see an increase in their allowance which will offset the increases. However, those pupils who pay, particularly from lower income families, may see a reduction of products that they can buy but it is Chartwell's responsibility to ensure that the increases across the product range have minimal impact.	Data from schools and Contractor	Contractor-Chartwells and Contract Manager NCC Education
IMPACT ON WELSH LANGUAGE			
Summary of impact	Action to reduce negative impact / opportunities to increase positive impacts	How this impact will be monitored	Owner
SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS			
Summary of impact	Action to reduce negative impact / opportunities to increase positive impacts	How this impact will be monitored	Owner

<p>The proposed increase in school meal prices is anticipated to potentially increase inequalities of outcome for secondary school children living in poverty likely to experience socio-economic disadvantage as their household does not meet the criteria for FSM.</p>	<p>In secondary schools as the service is commercial, pupils can access food at breakfast, mid-morning break and lunchtime. There are differing menus for each, and the increases will be spread across the food products and drinks available, with some products being swapped for cheaper alternatives. The increases will be variable, and pupils should not see a dramatic change in what they are able to spend as it is the responsibility of the contractor to ensure that the menus are attractive, so uptake does not decrease. FSM pupils will see an increase in their allowance which will offset the increases. However, those pupils who pay, particularly from lower income families, may see a reduction of products that they can buy but it is Chartwell's responsibility to ensure that the increases across the product range have minimal impact.</p>	<p>Data from schools and Contractor</p>	<p>Contractor- Chartwells and Contract Manager NCC Education</p>
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLE			
Summary of impact	Action to reduce negative impact / opportunities to increase positive impacts	How this impact will be monitored	Owner

Once your FEIA is complete, please forward to ncequality@newport.gov.uk