

November 2020

Response to Cllr Michael Jones' Notice of Motion on Milk at School Break Time to County Council on 6 November 2020

1. The Chairman of the County Council referred the notice of motion on milk at school break time (see Appendix), submitted by Cllr Jones to the County Council on 6 November 2020, to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills for consideration.
2. The motion called on the Cabinet Member to work with the Cabinet to provide funding to enable the reversal of the decision to cease providing morning break time school milk for the over 5s for 2020/21 with effect from September 2020. It called on him to utilise the savings achieved over the past six months as a result of members not having to travel to meetings to meet the cost.
3. The Cabinet Member met Cllr Jones on 11 November 2020 to discuss the motion; the Director of Education and Skills also attended the meeting. During the discussion it was explained that the Government had reduced the Historic Commitments part of the funding stream for the Central Schools Services Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) by 20% for the 2020/21 year. The provision of free milk at morning break to those pupils eligible for free school meals had been previously funded from this element of the Central School Services Block.
4. It was highlighted that in order to re-align expenditure to reflect the 20% reduction in this part of the DSG grant, in January and March 2020 reports on this matter were presented to the [Schools Forum](#), who have to be consulted on these matters. The reports proposed to reduce or cease funding a number of current budget provisions, collectively known as Combined Services, which had been used for the wider benefit of children and young people. One of the items that would cease being funded as part of these proposals was the provision of free milk at morning break to pupils who receive free school meals, which would save a budgeted £70,000 (with actual expenditure through take-up by schools of £40,000). Schools Forum approved the size of the 2020/21 Combined Services budget at the January 2020 meeting and agreed to the allocation of the reduced budget across the various services that had historically been paid for out of this funding at the March 2020 meeting.
5. The Cabinet Member reminded Cllr Jones that, as set out in the paper to Schools Forum, schools receive Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) which could be used in a range of different ways to support vulnerable children on their school roll. Part of this PPG could therefore be directed by schools to reinstating provision of free school milk at morning break. It was also highlighted that children in receipt of free school meals still receive a portion of milk on each school day as this is part of the lunchtime meal provision.
6. The Cabinet Member explained that although there had been reduced usage of the Member expenses budget, due to the reduction in travel and subsistence claims incurred as a result of the pandemic, it could not be guaranteed that this would continue to be the case. Should there be an easing of the current Covid restrictions, Member meetings, and the travel associated with these, may resume. As a consequence, it would therefore not be appropriate to utilise the

Member expenses budget to fund provision of milk when this could not conceivably be sustained.

7. Provision of free milk at morning break to eligible pupils is not a statutory requirement. Children in receipt of free school meals are still provided with milk at lunchtime and this is unaffected by the reductions to the Central Schools Services Block. The potential for the resumption of expenditure of the Member expenses budget needed to be allowed for.
8. For these reasons the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills is unable to support the motion and proposes to recommend that members do not support it at the County Council meeting on 11 December 2020.

Nigel Jupp

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

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Appendix: Notice of Motion on Milk at School Break Time

Background papers

None

Notice of Motion on Milk at School Break Time

This Council notes that the number of families relying on support from food banks in some parts of the county has increased by as much as 80% in the last 12 months and that there has been a county-wide increase in applications for free school meals over the last six months compared to last year.

This Council also believes the provision of school milk provides a nutritional boost and keeps children hydrated between breakfast and lunch, helping them to concentrate and learn.

This Council therefore calls on the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to work with the Cabinet to provide funding to enable the reversal of the decision to cease providing morning break time school milk for the over 5s for 2020/21 with effect from September 2020. It calls on him to utilise the savings achieved over the past six months as a result of members not having to travel to meetings to meet the cost