

Report to Cabinet

November 2020

Notice of Motion on the Provision of Free School Meals in School Holidays

Report by Director of Law and Assurance

Summary

Cllr Michael Jones submitted a notice of motion to the Council on 6 November 2020, calling on the Cabinet to provide free meals for children entitled to free school meals during future school holidays during the current pandemic. The motion was referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

Recommendation

The Cabinet is asked to consider the motion and to agree a response to be submitted to the Council, indicating the Cabinet's view on how to deal with it.

Proposal

1 Background and context

1.1 Cllr Michael Jones submitted a notice of motion to the Council on 6 November 2020, calling on the Cabinet to provide free meals for children entitled to free school meals during future school holidays during the current pandemic. The wording of the motion is set out below.

'This Council expresses disappointment that the Government has voted against providing free meals for children entitled to free school meals in the October 2020 half term and during future school holidays. This Council also expresses disappointment that none of the West Sussex Members of Parliament who took part in the Parliamentary vote supported the proposal to provide meals during future school holidays, with seven of the eight actively voting against.'

This Council recognises that the on-going pandemic is causing hardship and poverty for many families within West Sussex and calls on the Cabinet to follow the example of other councils around the country to step in and provide free meals for children entitled to free school meals during future school holidays during the current pandemic.'

1.2 The Council briefing note by the Director of Education and Skills and the Director of Communities containing factual background information to the motion is attached at Appendix A.

1.3 The motion was referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

2 Proposal details

2.1 The Cabinet is asked to consider its response to the motion on free school meals during school holidays for submission to the next meeting of the County Council. The Government recently announced a Covid Winter Fund scheme, and the County Council is currently working through the implications of the grant for West Sussex.

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

3.1 As Cabinet as asked to give a view to Council on how to deal with this motion, this implication and those as laid out below are not applicable as no decision is being taken.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

4.1 Not applicable.

5 Finance

5.1 Not applicable.

6 Risk implications and mitigations

6.1 Not applicable.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

7.1 Not applicable.

Tony Kershaw
Director of Law and Assurance

Contact Officer: Natalie Jones-Punch, Democratic Services Officer, 033 022 25098, natalie.jones-punch@westsussex.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix A: Briefing note – Provision of Free School Meals in School Holidays

Background papers

None