

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>CONSULTATION ON DRAFT UPDATE TO NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL FOOD</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> March 2020</b>
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	<b>FOR DECISION</b>

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy and Engaged Communities
Outcome	Provide consultation response
Lead Officer	Head of Health & Built Environment

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	N/A
Included in Current Year Estimates	N/A
Capital/Revenue	N/A
Code	N/A
Staffing Costs	N/A

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No N/A	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No N/A	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No N/A	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No N/A	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No N/A	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No N/A	Date:

## **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide a Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council response to the consultation.

## **Background**

The Department of Education issued this consultation in January 2020 to seek views on a proposed update to the nutritional standard of all food provided in grant-aided schools. The Nutritional Standards for School Lunches and Other Food and Drinks in Schools were developed in keeping with government guidance on healthy eating in 2007. This guidance has since changed and it is necessary to update the nutritional standard to reflect current government guidance on healthy eating.

The proposals include increasing the availability of fruit, vegetables and fibre and reducing saturated fat, sugar, salt and processed red meat in school food. The consultation also proposes that the Nutritional Standards for other food and drinks should become mandatory in all grant-aided schools, applying to all food provided and proposes arrangements to monitor, evaluate and support schools in their implementation. Implications for the cost of school meals are also consulted upon.

The full consultation paper can be found at: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/consultations>

Attached as Appendix 1 is a suggested response to the consultation. The closing date for submission of responses to the Department of Education is 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Council endorse and submit this response pending full Council approval due to submission time constraints.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Consultation on the Draft Update to Nutritional Standards for School Food Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council Consultation response**

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft update to Nutritional Standards for School Food.

#### **Q1 Do you agree with the change(s) proposed above aimed at increasing the availability of fruit and vegetables?**

Yes Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council agrees with the proposed changes to increase availability of fruit and veg but recognise that cooking methods can greatly impact on the overall nutritional content of the fruit and vegetable served. i.e. steaming as opposed boiling.

#### **Q2 Do you agree with the change(s) proposed above aimed at increasing the availability of fibre?**

Yes Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council agrees with the proposed changes to increase availability of fibre.

#### **Q3 Do you agree with the change(s) proposed above aimed at reducing the availability of saturated fat?**

Yes Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council agrees with the proposed changes aimed at reducing availability of saturated fat.

#### **Q4 Do you agree with the change(s) proposed above aimed at reducing the availability of sugar?**

Yes Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council agrees however reformulation to provide alternative means of sweetening pancakes and scones should be explored to ensure these foods remain appetising to children.

It is acknowledged that the monitoring of a maximum portion of 10 ml of condiment will be challenging.

Breakfast cereals can have a high sugar content therefore it would be worthwhile also setting criteria for the sugar content of breakfast cereals on offer at school breakfast clubs.

#### **Q5 Do you agree with the change(s) proposed above aimed at reducing the availability of salt?**

Yes Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council agrees. Again it is acknowledged that the monitoring of a maximum portion of 10 ml of condiment will be challenging.

**Q6 Do you agree with the change(s) proposed above aimed at reducing the availability of processed red meat?**

Yes Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council agrees with the proposed changes aimed at reducing availability of processed red meat.

**Q7 Do you agree the Nutritional Standards for Other Food and Drinks should become mandatory in all grant-aided schools and apply equally to all food provided in the school setting?**

Yes Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council agrees.

**Q8 Do you agree that independent monitoring and evaluation arrangements should be established to ensure the updated Nutritional Standards are being implemented in all grant-aided schools?**

Yes Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council agrees that independent monitoring and evaluation is essential to ensure consistent implementation of the updated Nutritional Standards in schools. Any changes to the level of school meal uptake following implementation of the updated Nutritional Standards should be included in any monitoring and evaluation undertaken.

**Q9 In the absence of funding, do you think it would be reasonable to increase the price of a school meal for paying pupils by around 5 to 7 pence a meal to ensure a September 2020 implementation?**

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is of the view that consideration should be given to the impact on food poverty levels as a result of any proposed increase in school meal costs and regard given to any local and regional strategies on food poverty before doing so.

A potential impact of the revised standards and any associated price increase is that it may result in an increased uptake of school packed lunches. These currently sit outside the scope of the updated Nutritional Standards. Although it is recognised that many schools have healthy packed lunch policies, some do not and an increased uptake could have an overall detrimental effect on the diets of children. Therefore healthy packed lunch policies should be encouraged in all schools.

A media campaign aimed at parents around the implementation and content of the updated Nutritional Standards would increase awareness of the benefits of a healthy diet and could have a positive impact on the content of packed lunches and meals prepared at home.