



# Committee paper — school catering charges

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## Fictional document — demonstration example

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**Fictional document** — municipality, income bands and families invented for the demonstration. **This paper is a DRAFT:** it is read, corrected and signed by a public official before it enters the resolution pack. **Every figure carries the record it comes from and its date; no data external to the municipality appears in it.**

## 1. What the service costs today

| Element                        | Value           | Record and date                                           |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Full cost per meal             | €9.24           | Final accounts N, catering software, 214,800 meals served |
| Average price paid by families | €5.00           | Revenue orders, 208,400 meals billed                      |
| Net cost per meal              | €4.39           | Computed on meals served                                  |
| <b>Net cost N-2</b>            | <b>€812,000</b> | Final accounts N-2, approved                              |
| <b>Net cost N-1</b>            | <b>€878,000</b> | Final accounts N-1, approved                              |

| Element    | Value                           | Record and date                                  |
|------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Net cost N | €944,000                        | Final accounts N, provisional as at 12 February  |
| Trend      | +€66,000 a year, twice in a row | The steadiness is the fact to put to the council |

## 2. The grid in force — 8 bands, 3,860 families

| Income band   | Price per meal                  | Families     | Meals billed   | Income                                                      |
|---------------|---------------------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Band 1        | €1.40                           | 412          | 18,600         | €26,040                                                     |
| Band 2        | €2.50                           | 486          | 24,900         | €62,250                                                     |
| <b>Band 3</b> | <b>€3.40</b>                    | <b>610</b>   | <b>31,200</b>  | <b>€106,080</b>                                             |
| Band 4        | €4.50                           | 638          | 34,800         | €156,600                                                    |
| Band 5        | €5.60                           | 474          | 26,100         | €146,160                                                    |
| <b>Band 6</b> | <b>€6.70</b>                    | <b>512</b>   | <b>28,400</b>  | <b>€190,280</b>                                             |
| <b>Band 7</b> | <b>€7.50</b>                    | <b>418</b>   | <b>24,700</b>  | <b>€185,250</b>                                             |
| <b>Band 8</b> | <b>€8.60</b>                    | <b>310</b>   | <b>19,700</b>  | <b>€169,420</b>                                             |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>Average price paid €5.00</b> | <b>3,860</b> | <b>208,400</b> | <b>€1,042,080, rounded to €1,042,000</b>                    |
| Reference     | —                               | —            | —              | <b>Charging resolution of 24 June N-3, articles 2 and 3</b> |

## 3. Three costed options — with their winners and losers named

| Option | Effect on income | Net cost after | Families affected | What to know before choosing |
|--------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
|--------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------------------|

|                                                                            |                 |                 |                                               |                                                                                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1 — Uniform 3% uprating across the 8 bands</b>                          | <b>+€31,000</b> | <b>€913,000</b> | <b>All 3,860, including the 412 in band 1</b> | <b>The highest yield, but it also touches the lowest bands</b>                    |
| <b>2 — 5% uprating on the 3 top bands only (6, 7 and 8)</b>                | <b>+€27,000</b> | <b>€917,000</b> | <b>1,240 out of 3,860 — 32.1%</b>             | <b>Almost the same yield as option 1, for a third of the families touched</b>     |
| <b>3 — Grid unchanged, band 3 brought down to the social rate of €2.80</b> | <b>–€19,000</b> | <b>€963,000</b> | <b>610 families better off</b>                | <b>Net cost rises by €19,000 — less than a third of the annual trend observed</b> |

**The assumption common to all three options is written at the head of this page, not in a footnote: meal numbers constant at 208,400 billed meals. If attendance moves by 5%, the income swing is €52,000 either way — more than the gap between the three options. That is the variable that tips the decision, and the assembly must know it before the vote, not after.**

## **4. The history of your own decisions — the intelligence most often missing**

| <b>Resolution</b>  | <b>Decision taken</b>          | <b>Net cost of the following year</b> | <b>Movement</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Resolution of 2019 | Creation of the 8 income bands | €684,000                              | —               |
| Resolution of 2021 | Uniform 2% uprating            | €742,000                              | +€58,000        |
| Resolution of 2022 | Grid unchanged                 | €796,000                              | +€54,000        |

| Resolution                | Decision taken        | Net cost of the following year | Movement                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Resolution of 24 June N-3 | Uniform 2.5% uprating | €812,000                       | +€16,000                                                                                                    |
| Reading                   | —                     | —                              | An uprating slows the rise in net cost for one year; in none of the three measured cases does it reverse it |

**What this paper does not do for you, and that is as it should be: the choice.** It brings **the three costed routes, their winners and losers named band by band, the assumption behind them and its sensitivity, and the history of your own decisions.** The decision is taken in committee, and it takes thirty minutes instead of a preparatory meeting. The paper is written and signed by a public official: it is an act of the authority, not the output of a machine — and that is precisely what makes it stand up.

Paper read, corrected and signed by the chief executive, on: \_\_\_\_\_

Option retained by the education committee and put to the council: \_\_\_\_\_

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