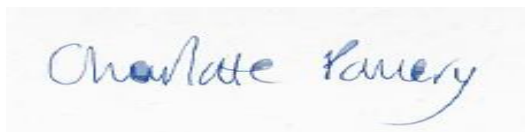


Report for: Cabinet Member Signing, 20 June 2017

Item number:

Title: Permission to consult on proposals for Meals on Wheels



Report authorised by : Charlotte Pomery, Assistant Director Commissioning

Lead Officer: Christine Mosedale, Commissioning Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Key Decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1 Ensuring all adults lead healthy, long and fulfilling lives is a key priority of the Corporate Plan, Building a Stronger Haringey Together, 2015 – 2018. Whilst the Council faces a challenging financial climate over the coming years due to reducing funding and increasing demand, the approach continues to be ambitious focusing on improving outcomes for all residents, promoting independence and building choice and control.
- 1.2 Within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved by full Council in February 2017, proposals to withdraw the subsidy for meals on wheels were set out, subject to consultation with a range of stakeholders. There are a number of community alternatives to the current model of delivery of meals on wheels which are set out in this paper, which requests permission to consult with a range of stakeholders on these proposals, prior to a final decision by Cabinet.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1 Our Corporate Plan sets out our ambitions to enable adults in the borough to live long, healthy and fulfilling lives. In the proposals set out here for consultation we put forward different ways of supporting users to enjoy a daily nutritious meal which promote their independence, reduce social isolation and contribute towards this ambition. In the proposed new approach, the Council will help users to navigate the community options available and choose the one that best suits their needs. We will support all current users through the transition to the new model and we will listen carefully to the outcomes of the consultation whilst continuing to develop the community offer to meet the needs of our residents.

3. Recommendations

For the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Culture:

- 3.1 To approve consultation with service users, carers and other stakeholders the proposal to end the subsidy for meals on wheels.
- 3.2 To agree that a report on the findings of the consultation and the proposed recommendation be brought back to Cabinet for a decision.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 In delivering the Corporate Plan, the Council aims to enable all adults to lead healthy, long and fulfilling lives through a strong emphasis on promoting independence, personalisation and choice and control. The current arrangements for meals on wheels, in which a subsidy is paid by the Council for each meal delivered through a contract with an external supplier, are taken up by approximately 110 users each month. The proposals set out in this paper would offer greater choice to residents in need of support to access a daily hot meal, whilst enabling the Council to make savings and to build a more sustainable community offer to more residents.
- 4.2 There has been no increase in client contributions to the service since 2012/13 and the contribution has only increased by 20p from £3.20 to £3.40 since 2010. Costs of the meal overall have increased, however, with a standard meal now costing £7.60 and the Council pays at least £4 towards every meal, costing over £140,000 each year. In addition, the number of users accessing the service has reduced from over 300 in 2011 to only around 110 users now. The Council is keen to hear from stakeholders directly, through consultation, their views of the current service, of the proposed new offer and of the implications of removal of subsidy for them.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1 Significant work has been undertaken to explore an alternative offer to replace the current arrangements and this is set out in more detail in Section 6. Continuing with the current arrangements has been considered but rejected as the payment of the subsidy is not sustainable and only a limited number of users benefit from a hot meal. Given that neither the Care Act nor preceding legislation require meals to be subsidised or the cost of food to be met by the Council, consideration was given to withdrawing the subsidy whilst not building community based alternatives. This, however, was rejected as the development of a strong, community offer supports independence and meets the wider Council aspirations to build a stronger community in the borough.
- 5.2 Over 50% of London boroughs have ended their meals on wheels services. Haringey Council is the only borough in North Central London which still offers a subsidised Meals on Wheels service. Islington, Camden and Enfield ended their direct provision of Meals on Wheels services in 2011 and Barnet in 2015.

6. Background information

- 6.1 The current meals on wheels service, which attracts a Council subsidy, is one of many provisions available to residents with support and care needs and not able to prepare food for themselves in Haringey. A limited number of people benefit from this service. Going forward the role of the Council will increasingly be as a facilitator and navigator, helping the individual to decide which meals option of the community alternatives available they want to take up. The Council would not intend to promote one option but to ensure a number of ways of accessing a regular hot meal are in place and to work with users to make the choice which best meets their needs.
- 6.2 In working on this proposal, information about a range of existing services that residents will be able to access, both for delivery and in the community, has been collated and is being made more easily accessible through HariCare. As well as different methods of delivery there is also a range of different meals available, including culturally specific offers. Many service users and other local residents already access community based provision which offers the opportunity for company and support as well as the provision of a meal, without the need for an intervention by the Council and this is intended to continue.
- 6.3 Those wishing to take up or retain the meals on wheels service as now could remain with the current supplier Sodexo at full cost for a hot meal delivery, from £6.50 for a standard meal. Whilst this is less than the standard meal cost of £7.60 per meal within the current contract, it represents an increase from the current level of client contribution which is £3.40 per meal.
- 6.4 For both new and existing users, there is the option to transfer to a frozen food delivery service, offered by a range of suppliers in the market including the existing meals on wheels supplier with prices from as low as £2.99 per meal.
- 6.5 A number of local community centres offer a meals on wheels service, delivering a daily hot meal Monday to Friday and costing between £4.50 and £7 per meal. The full costs of the meals are met by users of the service. The Council is working with another voluntary sector provider to encourage delivery of a meals on wheels service across the borough, able to operate without Council subsidy and to provide a meal, a cup of tea and medication prompting. This would start from late summer 2017.
- 6.6 There are a number of community centres that offer Luncheon clubs on various days, costing approx £5 per meal.
- 6.7 The Council is also working with providers to develop the community offer to ensure a range of choice options for residents to meet their needs, including exploring additional delivery options and working with sheltered housing communities to support the development of local luncheon clubs.

- 6.8 The options for how a hot meal will be made available to potential users will routinely be explored as part of the assessment and the support planning process. Where someone is a service user and chooses a frozen meal alternative the Council may need to provide a microwave/freezer (to ensure adequate storage space) and ensure home care is in place where a person is not able to heat the food and family are not able to assist. Brokers will be able to set up arrangements with the preferred provider. Where access to a luncheon club is an assessed need and the user is eligible for adult social care transport will be arranged.
- 6.9 Consultation for a period of 60 days with current users of the service, their family/carers and other stakeholders will get underway at the end of June 2017 subject to Cabinet approval. Feedback from this consultation will inform a proposal to Cabinet on whether to proceed with withdrawal of the subsidy in October 2017. Consultation methods will include face to face interviews, meetings and an online consultation questionnaire.
- 6.10 Should any changes to the current service model be made following consultation, there will be work with existing users of the service to ensure their needs and outcomes continue to be fully met.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 7.1 The Corporate Plan, Building a Stronger Haringey Together, sets out the vision and priorities for the Council. Its underpinning principles of empowering communities to enable people to do more for themselves and enabling all adults to lead healthy, long and fulfilling lives align well with the proposals for changes to the current meals on wheels offer as set out for consultation in this paper.

8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer, Procurement, Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities).

8.1 Finance

By removing the Meal on Wheels subsidy the potential net budget saving achievable in a full year will be £123k. This saving would support the delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

If this option were not considered as viable, other services may fall within the scope of service reductions.

8.2 Procurement

N/A

8.3 Assistant Director of Corporate Governance

There is a common law duty on the Council to consult with service users, carers, providers and other stakeholders that are likely to be affected by the proposals. The consultation must take place at a time when the proposals, as with the recommendations, are still at their formative stages. The Council must provide the consultees with sufficient information to enable them properly to understand the

proposals being consulted upon and to express a view in relation to it. The information must be clear, concise, accurate and must not be misleading. The consultees must be given adequate time to consider the proposals and to respond. The Council must give genuine and conscientious consideration to the responses received from the consultees before making its final decision on the proposals.

As part of its decision making process, the Council must have “due regard” to its equalities duties. Under Section 149 Equality Act 2010, the Council in exercise of its adult care and support functions, must have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it in order to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. The protected characteristics are age, gender reassignment, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In line with its equalities duties, the Council must undertake an Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) of the proposals on the protected groups. The Council is required to give serious, substantive and advance consideration of the what (if any) the proposals would have on the protected group and what mitigating factors can be put in place. This exercise must be carried out with rigour and an open mind and should not be a mere form of box ticking. These are mandatory consideration. The outcome of the consultation on the proposals together with the analysis of the EIA must be considered before reaching a final decision on the proposals.

8.4 Equality

As mentioned above, the Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity for those with ‘protected characteristics’ and those without them
- Foster good relations between those with ‘protected characteristics’ and those without them.

The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership status, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation.

This decision is asking permission to go out to consult on the withdrawal of the subsidy and future provision of Meals on Wheels. Within the consultation, we will ask questions regarding religious and cultural meal preferences to ensure we try to meet the needs of particular communities related to religion/faith and race.

The consultation will offer reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled people are able to participate in the consultation.

A draft initial Equality Impact Assessment (see Appendix 1) is attached and will continue to be updated to incorporate the results of the consultation and any further equality implications.

9. Use of Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: Draft Equalities Impact Assessment

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1995
N/A