

North Somerset Council

REPORT TO THE ADULT SERVICES AND HOUSING POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 12TH APRIL 2018

SUBJECT OF REPORT: COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE

TOWN OR PARISH: N/A

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: SHEILA SMITH, DIRECTOR PEOPLE AND
COMMUNITIES**

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Panel consideration and comment

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report provides the Panel with an update on the community meals service and the priority actions for 2017/18/19.

2. POLICY

N/A

3. DETAILS

3.1 CONTEXT

Hot meal services across the country are only provided through Local Authorities or contracts with organisations such as Social Enterprises as they are not services that make profit.

In many parts of the country, numbers are reducing and this is due to many reasons, including the fact that there are other food only providers where people are able to prepare/regenerate for themselves and do not require the added value services of Community Meals. However, hot meal services such as meals on wheels are now supporting a much more vulnerable client group. It is rare that someone is with the service for the purpose of food only. In North Somerset the majority of people using the meals on wheel service have very complex conditions including the following:

- 43% have dementia or memory loss
- 65% have poor mobility
- 20% are diabetic
- 17% need encouragement to eat

Meals on Wheels has extended its offer and now also can provide an evening snack and this is delivered at the same time as the hot meal at lunch time. The service is much appreciated especially by family and carers who tell us that they value the welfare check from the delivery staff. If delivery staff notice that a client is unwell or they have concerns for their safety they will telephone the administration team who will, in turn, contact the nearest relative to convey their concerns.

In 2017 the number of clients taking up meals on wheels fell but we have focused our efforts on promoting the service more widely and the number of people currently receiving meals on wheels is 482. In January 2018, 61 new referrals were made. Of the 482, 37% rely on the meals 7 days a week and 30% rely on the meals 5 days a week with family supporting on the other 2 days.

3.2 Priority Actions for 2017/18/19

- To continue to promote and market the service to increase take up of the meal service with a view to reducing organisational subsidy.
- Increase the current price in April 2018 to £5 per meal
- To input a menu service to increase take up of the tea service. Added teas increase revenue as delivery cost is already in place through hot meal. This work is already in the planning stages with Business Support
- To begin formal discussions with Bristol City Council around an amalgamation, beginning with management of the service
- To formally research and open discussions with other Social Enterprises and Providers around the future of the North Somerset and Bristol Service
- To monitor income and expenditure and ensure that delivery numbers do not drop and that there is an upturn.
- Further financial monitoring and work around when and how the service could get to a zero Trading Account to be completed by September 2019.
- Further work around adding the transporting of children at the start and end of the day as a business option for the service, which utilises vehicles more fully and reduces the Council's current budgets elsewhere

4. CONSULTATION

N/A

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Despite a rise in the number of people using the service, it still runs at a deficit and this is currently £54k pa. However it is recognised that the budget is mis-aligned currently and this will be addressed with a net increase (growth) of approx. £83k. Alongside this we are increasing the cost of the hot meal to £5.00 from April. This should make the service cost neutral in the next two years.

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

N/A

8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

N/A

[Click here to enter Equality Implications]

9. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

N/A

10. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

AUTHOR

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