

## Appendix 2 – Staff Feedback

### **MEETING WITH STAFF**

#### **Notes of meeting on 17 September 2013**

##### Management attendees:

Jan Dudgeon, Jane Faulks, Mercy Lett-Charnock, Jagruti Barai

##### Unions Representatives:

Minesh Patel – Unite, Dave Taylor – Unite, Billy Baksh – GMB, Christine Reader – GMB, Steve Barney – GMB, Gaynor Garner – UNISON

JF opened the meeting and explained the background and reason for the meeting. JF confirmed that the consultation on the proposals to close the service started on the 7 July 2013. This meeting was to provide a further opportunity for staff to feedback any comments verbally in addition to the other methods i.e. via the trade unions, e-mail or telephone to the project team.

The following comments were received.

1. Staff will be losing jobs
2. Service users will not be getting a meal

MLC commented that the proposal was about ceasing this service, not meals support as the Council still had a duty to ensure people can obtain or prepare a meal.

3. The unions added that the consultation on the proposals with service users was not good enough, particularly those that cannot read or are not mobile enough to attend the focus groups

MLC confirmed that there was a help-line number and the option of a 1:1 meeting had been offered to users. Interest groups such as the Forum for Older People had also been attended as these groups represent the interests of mobile meals users.

JB confirmed that further consultation on redundancy would take place if the decision is to close the service, but stated that attempts would be made to redeploy staff into other roles wherever possible.

4. BB queried why consultation did not take place when there were more service users.
5. Some users had stated that Social Workers are not promoting the service and telling clients that the service is closing, this issue goes back 2 years.

6. In the 2009/2010 budget the proposal was to cut the service, if this process had started then, then there would have been wider consultation.
7. A concern was raised about giving out personal data of clients i.e. key code numbers to a third party and compliance with the Data Protection Act.
8. It was also raised that all budget cuts of late are affecting the old and vulnerable.
9. Staff understood the service to be closing in December.

MLC confirmed that the service was not closing in December, no decision has been made and the earliest would be in June 2014.

10. The number of meals delivered had been declining over a 2 – 3 year period; this had been raised with management with no action taken to improve.
11. Concern was raised about the service users, as when the meals are delivered this is the only contact they have with anybody in the day.

MLC confirmed that alternatives would be in place so all clients that have been assessed as requiring a meal would get a meal, this could be provided through a carer if required and therefore reduce their isolation.

12. Concern was raised about warming meals in a microwave, potentially they are not cooked properly, and concern was also raised that the meals could end up being sandwiches and soup.
13. It was felt that the service was required in the community and that there was a demand for it but it wasn't being offered any more e.g. to those leaving hospital. More advertising should be done.
14. It was also felt that this situation could be turned around and referrals increased. Money was being spent elsewhere on unnecessary projects such as the Market redevelopment. It was seen that Council staff were too expensive and a cheaper option was being sought.
15. Concern was also raised about Health & Safety and hygiene of any alternative providers.
16. Questions were raised about alternative employment options. JB confirmed that if a decision to cease the service was made, further consultation would be undertaken around redundancies.

JF thanked all for their comments and re-iterated that further comments could be made either via e-mail or telephone or through the unions to the project team. The closing date for the consultation was 7 October 2013.

JF confirmed that these comments would be fed into the report for the Executive.

***Additional member questions put forward (in writing) to the staff meeting:***

1. Even though there has to be money cut backs why does it have to be in the old and vulnerable?
2. Meals has been going down for well ever two and a half years, all meals on wheels staff have been concerned and regularly brought it to the attention of the office staff and of course Jan, Sheila and Anisha.
3. We were told social services were going round and telling service users they no longer could have meals, in fact to the old. One could say it was bullying tactics.
4. All our service users are old and most of them only see the meals/staff each day have you thought you are taking that safe/care line, away from them do you really care!
5. To issue microwaves, I have witnessed what carers do yes put meal in, blast away ding - done, put on service user's lap say goodbye and away we go – service user got hot meal on outside – COLD in the middle, they don't have time.
6. Family of service users don't think very highly of Leicester City Council and what they are proposing, it is a service that is required in our community. We are all caring and work to the best standard it's not just delivering a meal, it's being the 1<sup>st</sup> person if there is an emergency, even fatal we report, ring emergency services, wait with them, surely it's a service that is required?
7. This is on your behalf about the money, we could turn this around and go back to getting referrals, there are a lot of elderly out there that need this service. Surely you can cut back elsewhere office staff – spending money in e.g. Leicester market – that wasn't all that long ago all that money spend councillors pay rise etc

**50+ NETWORK**

***Extract from the minutes of a meeting on 29 July 2013***

Mercy Lett-Charnock, Lead Commissioner for Early Intervention and Prevention at LCC, gave a presentation about “Mobile Meals” and took questions from the floor afterwards. Mercy invited those present to participate in the consultation that runs until 7th October. Further information can be found at:  
<http://consultations.leicester.gov.uk> or by telephoning 0116 252 8301.

**CARERS REFERENCE GROUP**

***Extract from the minutes of a meeting on 29 July 2013***

Mobile Meals Consultation

Mercy-Current consultation. Numbers of people having meals is dropping. Only 264 have the service. Flexibility and quality an issue. The proposal is to stop the meals but to find a good replacement that people want.

Ranjit- Asian people she has spoken to, don't like them.

One person has an agreement with a shop to supply his meals.

Mercy is going to the 50 plus network this pm and there will be focus groups on the proposals.

Gill raised the issue of isolation as a big problem. Mercy- This should be picked up on an assessment of need. Feedback welcome.

## **FORUM FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

*Extract from the minutes of a meeting on 29 July 2013*

The Chair introduced the item commenting that a review of the current mobile meals arrangements had begun. She asked Forum Members to note that customers currently in need of the service would still be provided for but that the existing arrangements of the service were likely to be altered given the current cost implications.

The Director of Care Services and Commissioning gave a presentation on the existing arrangements, together with the scope of the consultation and the current cost implications to the Council. The presentation focussed on the proposal to stop the Council's current mobile meals service and to help people to prepare or obtain meals in alternative and more flexible ways.

Forum Members were encouraged to take away and complete questionnaires provided. Other consultation material was made available including guidance on completing the questionnaire and information on frequently asked questions. It was noted that Focus Groups had also been arranged for customers and carers in order for views on the proposals to be submitted.

In reply to questions it was confirmed that the consultation would involve a wide range of stakeholder groups and external organisations. Officers also agreed to report back to the Forum on the result of the consultation and on future changes to the service.

## **DISCUSS**

*Extract from the minutes of a meeting on 10 September 2013*

Mercy Lett-Charnock talked about the mobile meals consultation taking place at the moment.

People have more choice and control over the services they receive. People are given a personal budget, so they can buy the services they need from a range of providers. This is having an impact on traditional services, such as mobile meals.

For every meal it costs the council additional £4.76 on top of £3.05 paid by the customer. The cost to the council is going up for mobile meals. Number of people using mobile meals is dropping. People are choosing other options such as ready meals.

Alternative options include:

- Having a personal assistant to help with meal preparation
- Having a domiciliary care worker reheat a ready meal delivered by Tesco for example
- Having local or national organisation deliver a mobile meal

The Council is looking at how to meet people's needs more effectively to support them to live in the community using services that meet their needs.

City transport delivers the meals between 11am and 2pm. Some people would prefer an evening meal but this cannot be provided by the current service. The figures show that number of mobile meals customers are dropping. Some service users are using their personal budget to have meals delivered and reheated by a personal assistant.

The proposal is to stop providing the mobile meals service by May 2014 and to help people prepare or obtain meals in more flexible ways. Service users will be supported to organise suitable alternative support that meets their need for food preparation.

If the proposal is agreed reassessments will start next year. All service users will also be reassessed to ensure they are not socially isolated and see how they can best be supported. The consultation runs from 9th July to 7th October 2013.

xx asked about what the council is doing to promote mobile meals.

Mercy said people were choosing other options such as talked about supermarket home delivery and people getting personal assistant to reheat meals but the Council service was still being offered.

xx said that people will feel lonely and isolated. There should be more activities in community like lunch club where people can go once a week. Elderly people might not want people coming in their home to heat meals.

Yasmin talked about a lady who is blind, as part of her package somebody takes her out for lunch once a week.

xx said that it could be that people are not happy with the quality of mobile meals. Elderly people will be worried if mobile meals service stops.

Mercy said that everybody who is eligible will get a meal in different ways that suits them and whether people might be lonely or isolated is considered as part of the assessment.

Mercy asked people to feed their views into the consultation if they had anything further to add and left copies of questionnaires.