

CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF MOBILE MEALS PROVISION IN LEICESTER

JULY – OCTOBER 2013
Findings report

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How to use this report

This report collates the responses from a statutory consultation exercise. The main body of the report summarises the responses from a variety of sources. Appendices 1 and 2 provide more detailed responses and comments. Any information that would allow for a customer or provider to be identified has been removed.

PART 1 - INTRODUCTION

Statutory consultation was carried out between 9 July and 7 October 2013 on the future of Leicester's mobile meals service.

The proposal:

Stopping the Council's current mobile meals service and helping people to prepare or obtain meals in alternative and more flexible ways.

The consultation was led by a small team of staff within adult social care.

PART 2 - METHODOLOGY FOR THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

We invited comments on the proposals from people who receive mobile meals, their families and interested parties.

Letters and questionnaires to service users

Letters and questionnaires were sent to everyone who was using the mobile meals service on 9 July 2013. An information booklet and a frequently asked questions booklet were also included. All of these were made available in different formats or languages where requested. A prepaid envelope was supplied to allow people to respond as easily as possible. If anyone felt that they would have difficulty in filling in the questionnaire, an officer was available to visit them and assist.

A reminder letter and another copy of the questionnaire were sent out on 23 September 2013 to give people a further opportunity to respond if they hadn't already done so.

On line questionnaire

The questionnaire was made available on the Council's website for anyone to fill in.

Focus groups

Two focus groups were held for service users or their relatives/carers. There is nothing to report back on these. One person attended. A one-to-one meeting was held with this person to discuss the issues and take the person's views through a questionnaire.

One-to-One interviews and additional support

We provided the documentation in different languages on request and where appropriate, the information was converted to Easy Read and/or support workers assisted customers to understand the proposal so that they could contribute if they wished. Officers visited customers in exceptional circumstances to help them fill in the questionnaires. There were two such visits.

Key stakeholders, councillors and MPs

Letters were sent to various groups representing the wider interests of older people, inviting them to take part in a meeting and/or respond to the consultation in another way. Various forums were also consulted, such as the 50+ Network, Carers Reference Group, Discuss and Forum for Older People. Each Leicester City councillor and MP was also written to about the proposal.

Helpline

A dedicated helpline was available for people to discuss any issues between 8.30am and 5pm Monday to Thursday (4.30 on Friday).

All calls to this number were logged and responded to appropriately.

Email

A dedicated email address was set up for people to contact us this way if they wished.

Letters to, and meetings with, current providers

The two current providers of meals on behalf of Leicester City Council were sent a letter informing them of the proposal. Individual meetings were held for each provider to discuss their views and concerns. Notes were taken of the comments raised at these meetings.

Staff and trade unions

Meetings were held with staff and trade unions and their views gathered.

PART 3 – SUMMARY

The key findings from the consultation are as follows (a more detailed analysis can be found in Part 4 of this report):

Customers:

In general, customers either appreciate, or feel they rely on, the current mobile meals service and wish to continue receiving a hot meal. 56% of respondents receive a meal every day. The majority of those who responded (80%) still want a hot meal delivered to them and comments that several of them made show that they would prefer this to be through the Council as it is now. However, a few of the comments indicate that some people recognise that current financial pressures on the council and the availability of alternatives that weren't possible until recently, mean that the service needs to change.

38% of those who responded felt that the full cost would not be value for money. 33% felt that the full cost would be good or very good value for money if they were asked to pay the full amount. Comments made on the questionnaires indicate that there would be some people who would be willing to pay more for quality food, whereas others could not afford any increase.

A notable proportion (32%) of respondents felt that they would miss someone calling in on them daily and therefore the need for a meal was not their only benefit from the service. Some comments show that this is linked to concern about what would happen to them if they no longer received a daily visit. 30% felt that they would need help and support to find alternatives if the service was stopped.

A large amount of customers (46%) stated that they need appropriate meals for religious or cultural reasons and 62% have one or more specific dietary needs, the most common being vegetarian or diabetic. Some people have also commented that they are concerned that any new arrangements may not provide the nutrition they need.

Trade Unions, staff and stakeholder groups

The main concern was about isolation and welfare, particularly the benefits of a daily check. There was also a feeling that the Council had been deliberately running the service down. A suggestion was made that the service should be promoted to increase usage and make it more cost effective. It was also suggested that the reasons why the number had declined were not fully understood. They felt that there were risks if people went directly to providers who had not been vigorously quality-checked.

Current providers

Current providers had concerns about the potential for any change to impact on their business and other work that they do as a result. They felt that information could be

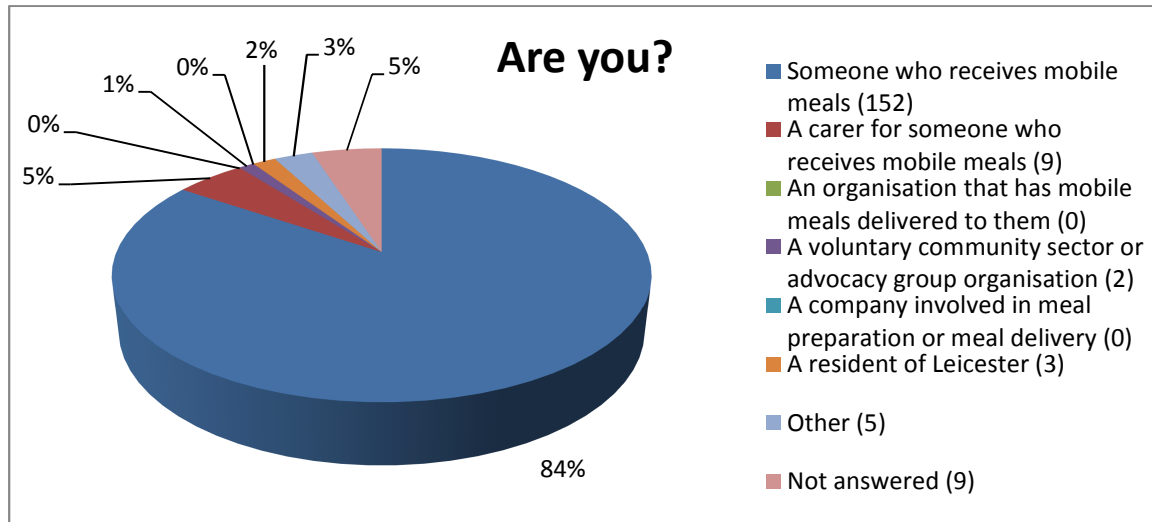
given to self-funders about providers, but that there could be risks if people chose cheaper options from places without such rigorous checks that they currently go through. They stressed the need for culturally-appropriate meals and that some types of food, such as Caribbean, cost more due to the higher cost of ingredients.

PART 4 - CONSULTATION FINDINGS

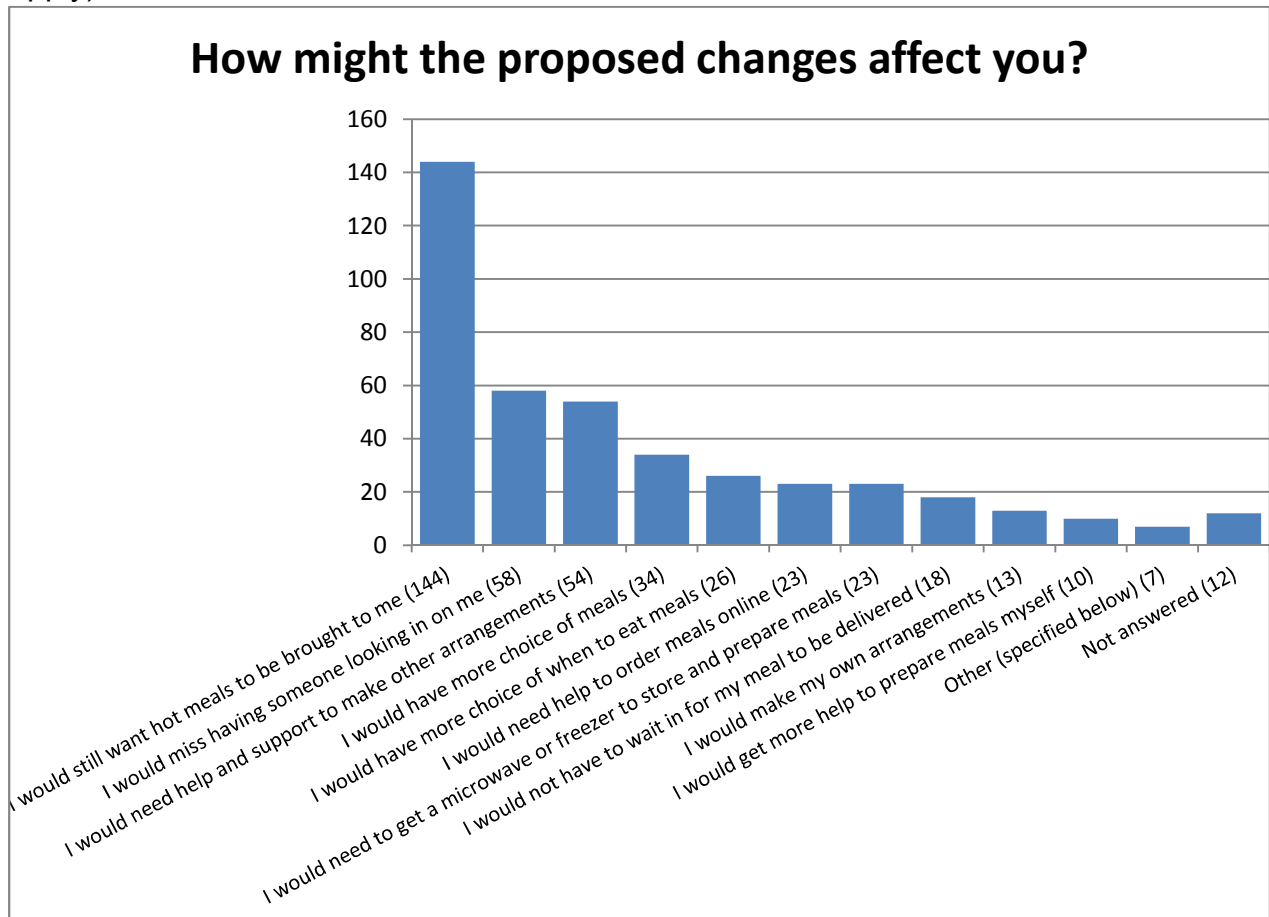
Questionnaires

- Number of questionnaires sent out: **261**
- Number of questionnaires returned: **177**
- Percentage return rate: **63%**
- Number of questionnaires filled in on the consultation website: **3**

Question 1 – Are you...?



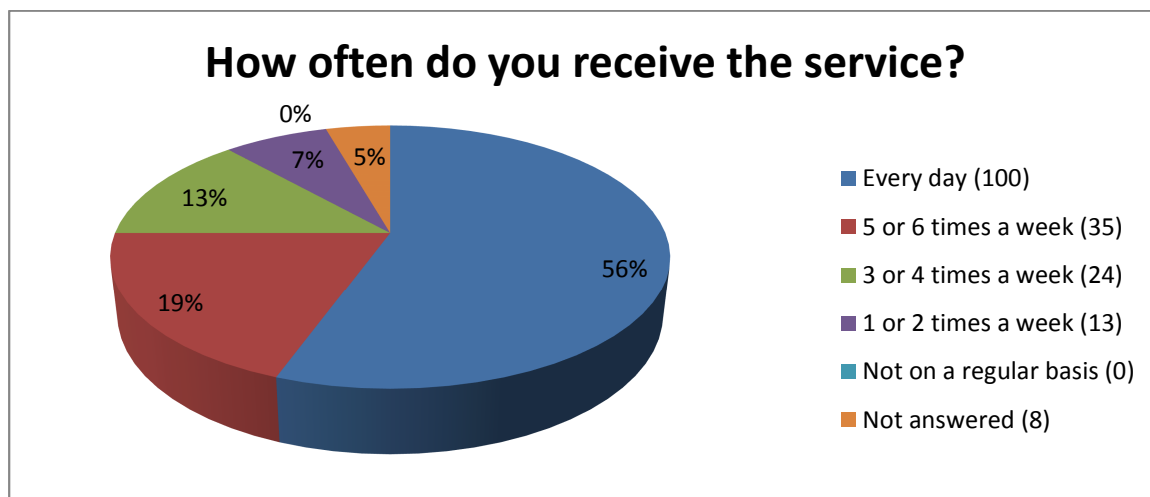
Question 2 – How might the proposed changes affect you? (please tick all that apply)



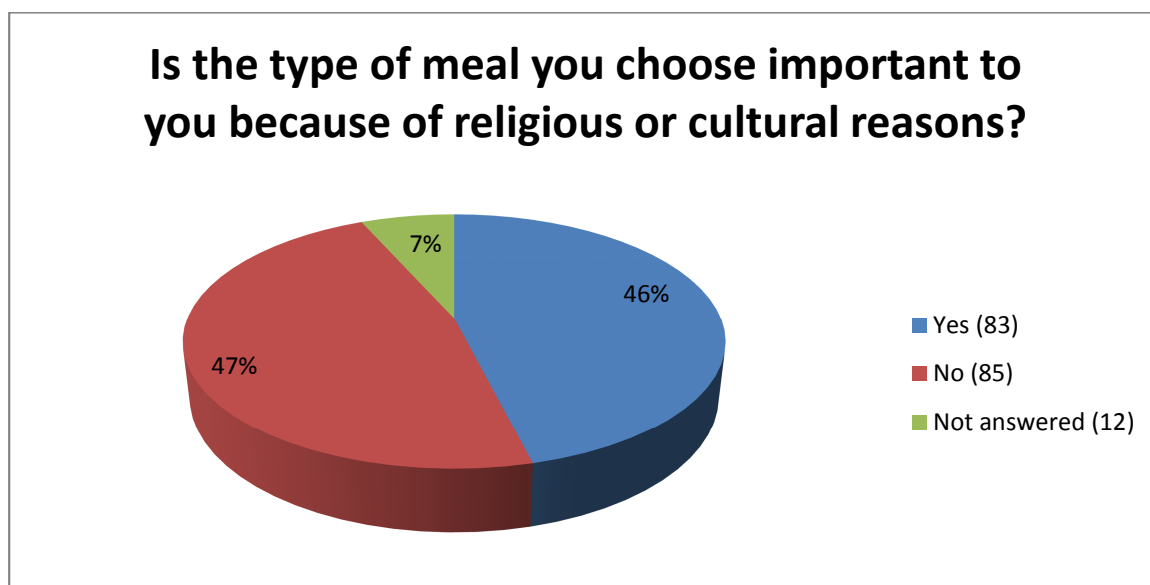
“Other:”

- My body is feeble. My mouth cannot chew hard crispy food. The meals I get currently are nourishing. I do not want change.
- Son lives outside Leicestershire. He would have to bring food in.
- No internet access
- Unable to do food myself safely
- Extra pressure on family to get meals in. Family members are already under immense pressure to care for family member at home.
- Community Centre running luncheon club
- Person would have no means of eating a main meal as intolerant of strangers except for MOW driver with whom he has built relationship over a number of years

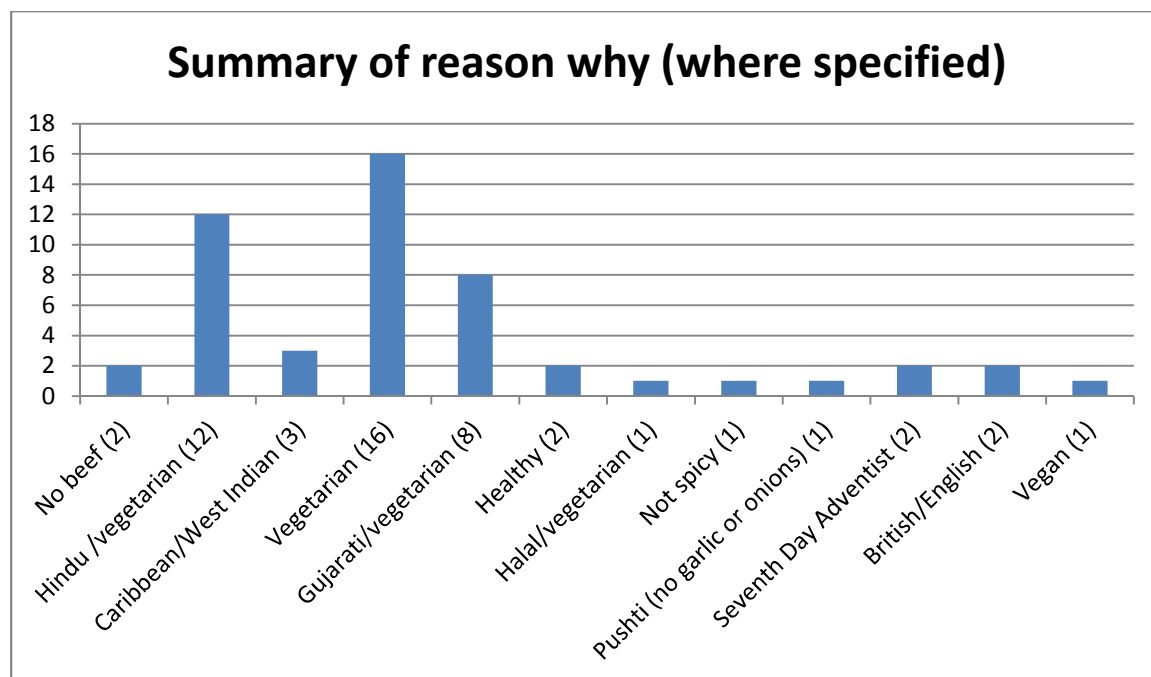
Question 3 – How often do you receive the service?



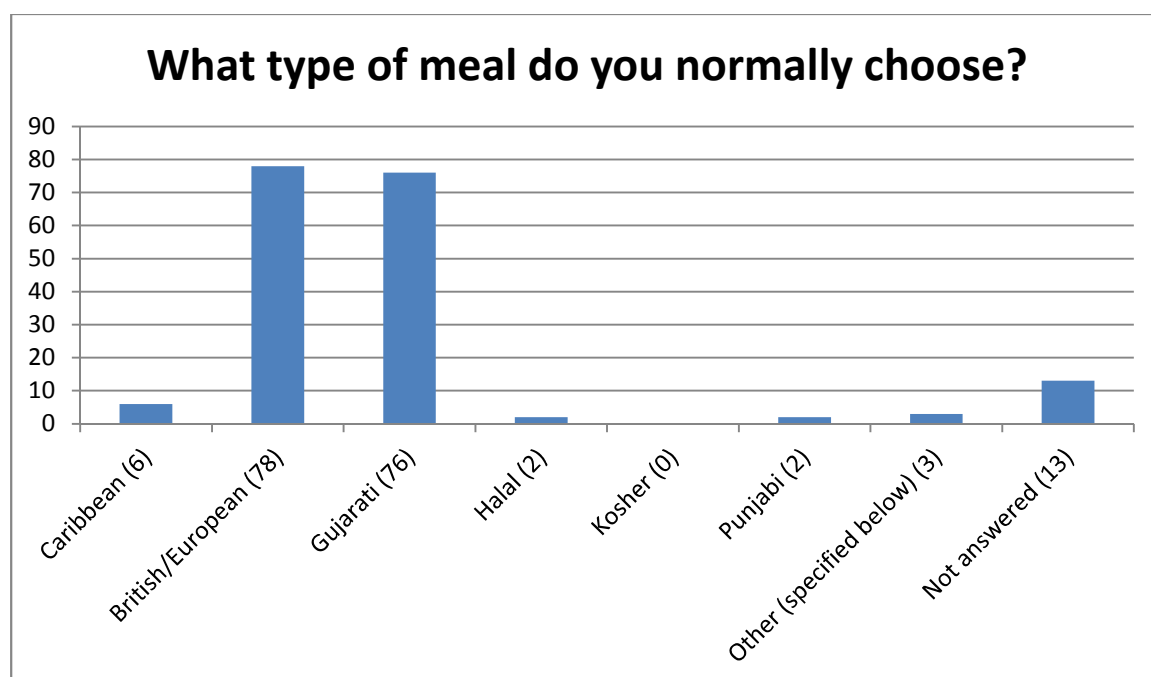
Question 4 – Is the type of meal you choose important to you because of religious or cultural reasons?



Summary of reasons given for why the type of meal is important:



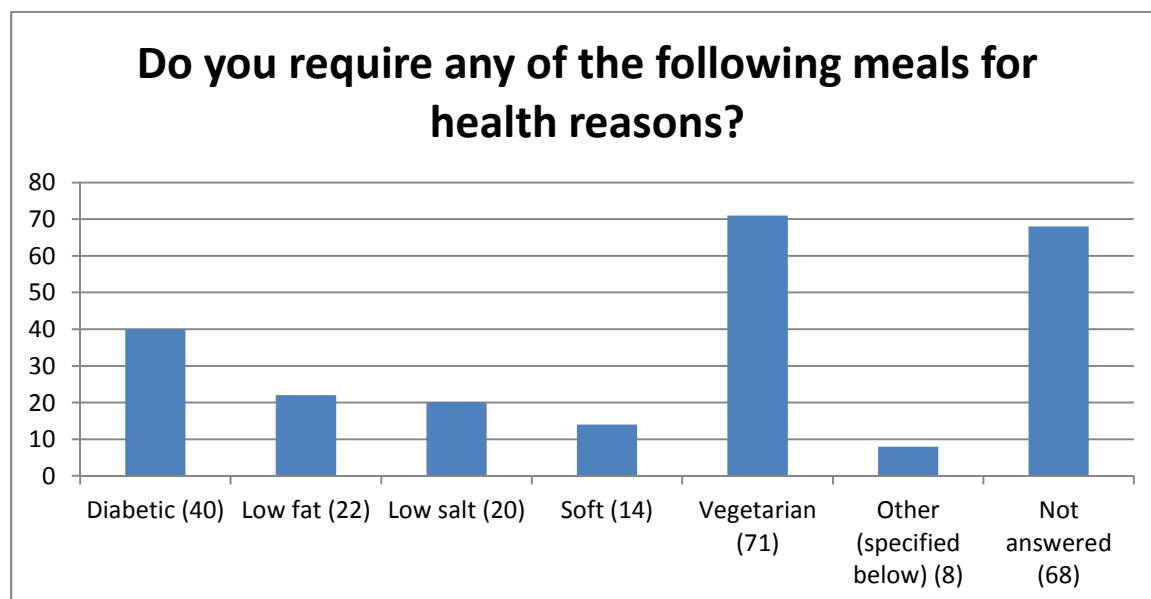
Question 5 – What type of meal do you normally choose? (please tick all that apply)



Other types of meal:

- Hindu
- English cooked meals (specific request for English, not British)
- Extra specially mild
- Chinese (amongst other choices)

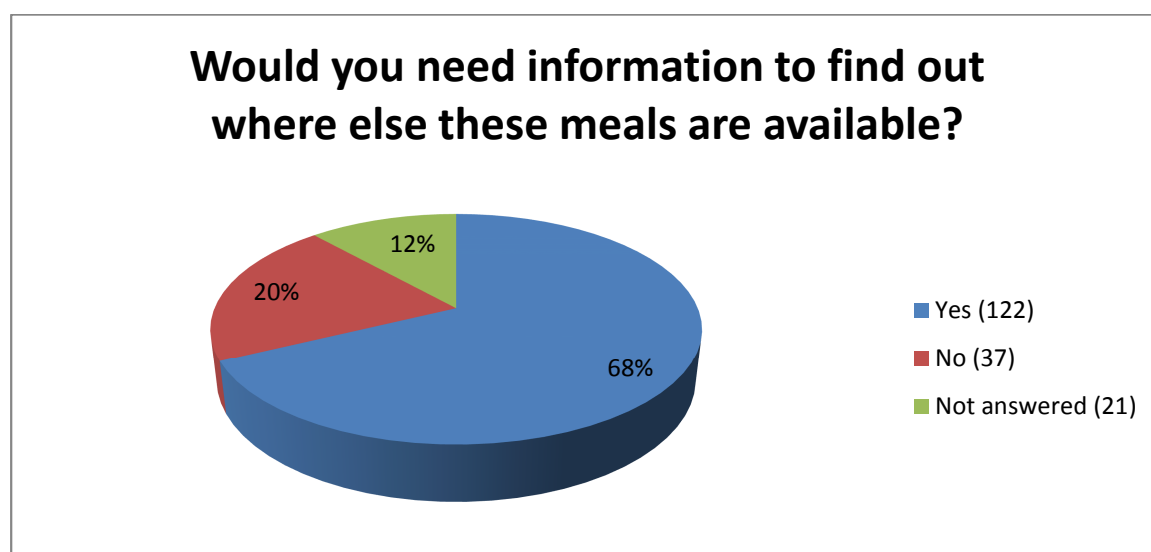
Question 6 – Do you require any of the following meals for health reasons?
(please tick all that apply)



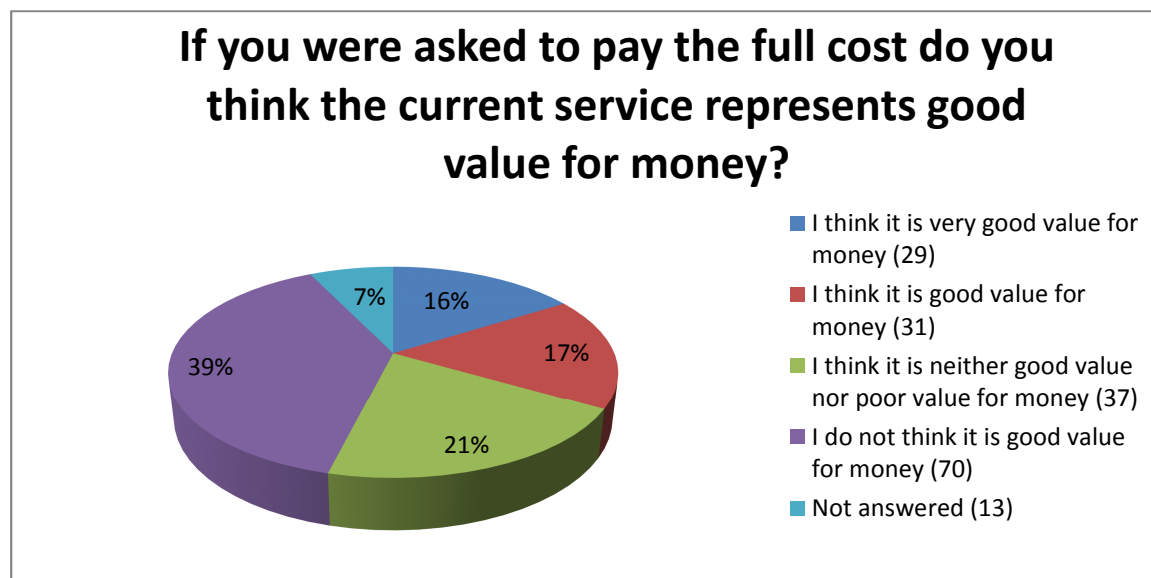
Other meals specified:

- Less oily, not spicy, chilli and not rich. I have simple meals as my stomach gets upset easily
- Specially extra mild
- Pureed
- Mild meals with no chilli
- Asthmatic, underweight
- Vegan

Question 7 – Would you need information to find out where else these meals are available?



Question 8 – The full cost of a meal from the mobile meals service is currently £7.76 (customers pay £3.05 and we pay the rest.) **If you were asked to pay the full cost, do you think the current service represents good value for money?**



Question 9 – We believe that the proposed changes to mobile meals services are fair because help will still be given to those who need it. They will also help the council to spend its limited resources more equally. **Do you have any views about this and any comments on how the council can best support people who need help with meals?**

Main issues raised:

- Daily visit is important
- Keep service the same
- Not safe to have someone heat a meal in my home
- Home care would be more expensive
- Willing to pay a little more if council can help with the rest
- Can't afford to pay more
- More choice needed
- People need routine
- Need help/advice if there is a change
- Agree that there are better options
- Nutrition concerns
- Appreciate current service
- Worry about health and wellbeing without the service

Other responses

MEETINGS

The proposals were discussed at meetings and responses recorded as follows (full minute extracts are in Appendix 2):

Trade Unions	<p>Three meetings were held. Key issues raised were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about availability of suitable alternatives for staff. • Feel that the service has intentionally been run down and that a balanced choice not being given. • Propose that the Council should trial promotion of the service to increase take-up and reduce unit cost. • Concerns from drivers that customers will lose human contact, which could lead to isolation and risk to their welfare. • Concerns about the quality of assessments and the risk of someone without “critical” or “substantial” needs eventually needing more support. • Queries about why the numbers had dropped so dramatically – don’t believe it’s due to personalisation alone. • Will direct payments be sufficient to meet people’s needs? • Concerns about nutrition.
50+ Network	Received briefing, but no comments made.
DISCUSS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asked what the council was doing to promote mobile meals. • Isolation – should be more lunch clubs. • People may not be happy with the quality of the meals.
Carers Reference Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation is a big problem.
Forum for Older People	Received briefing, questions were asked but no comments were made.
Staff	<p>Meeting held with the unions present. Key issues were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why didn’t we consult in 2010/11 when there were more customers? • Believe social workers are not promoting the service and are telling people it is closing. • Concerns about giving customers’ personal data to a third party. • Effects of budget cuts on old and vulnerable. • No action has been taken to increase numbers. • Microwave meals may not be cooked properly. • Could end up with sandwiches and soup. • Should advertise the service more.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council staff are seen as too expensive. • Concerns of health, safety and hygiene of other providers. • What are the alternative employment options? • This is the only contact some customers have with people all day. We check on them. • Cut back elsewhere in the Council.
Providers	<p>Invited to attend a meeting individually and discuss issues and concerns. Key issues were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still a need for culturally appropriate meals • Potential impact on their service if changes are agreed. • Give provider information to self funders. • Important to have the right checks – if customers buy cheaply, they may be risking their health and wellbeing.

HELPLINE, LETTERS, EMAILS

Helpline	<p>23 calls. Most to do with current service queries, which were dealt with appropriately. Calls about the consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 wanted to discuss in Gujarati or Hindi and 2 requests for home visits. • How soon will meals stop? • Want more food.
Letters	<p>2 letters received with the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council is deliberately saying people can't have mobile meals. • Need for daily checks. • Suggest combine with the County or school meals service. • Questions from Liz Kendall MP about impacts on customers in her constituency, including what support there would be and what assessments have been made of needs.
Emails	<p>4 emails were received, mostly about operational issues. Points raised specific to the consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile meals are needed for vulnerable people who don't want to engage, with no initiative and will accept only the minimum help. They don't want to manage alternatives. • Most private suppliers don't report non-access. • What about food safety issues for private suppliers. • Changes could lead to increased risk and blame on the council.
Freedom of Information request	<p>A FOIA request was received asking how many people in 2011/12 and 2012/13 were told that they could no longer have mobile meals. The response given was that there were four people no longer eligible for services.</p>

PART 13 – FURTHER INFORMATION

This report can be viewed electronically at:

http://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/adult-social-care-health-and-housing/mobile-meals/consult_view An equality impact assessment is available at the same link.

Contact details for further enquiries:

By post:

Adult Social Care Transformation Team,
Leicester City Council,
8th Floor, B Block
New Walk Centre
Welford Place
Leicester
LE1 6ZG

Email: mobilemeals-talk@leicester.gov.uk

Telephone: 0116 252 8301

APPENDIX 1 – FULL COMMENTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

Question 9 – We believe that the proposed changes to mobile meals services are fair because help will still be given to those who need it. They will also help the council to spend its limited resources more equally. **Do you have any views about this and any comments on how the council can best support people who need help with meals?**

- I am 88 and immobile. I have had a stroke and so can only use one hand therefore I cannot open frozen or packaged meals. I have found meals on wheels to be a god send as my daughter cannot come everyday to give me a hot meal. Also when she goes on holiday I am able to extend the amount of meals to every day and I would want to continue this and I am sad to think it is changing.
- As I can't walk very well and am almost housebound and at age of 83 yrs mobile meals are vitally important to me.
- Continue with the option of giving people like me a cultural Caribbean meal daily.
- As I am severely disabled and housebound I wouldn't like the meals on wheels service to stop. The council could try and get the local MP's to seek help from the Government for the sick & elderly who really need this service with possibly an extra allowance on benefits for people who could not afford the full amount for the meals.
- Unfortunately my mother has dementia. Prior to her being recommended for mobile meals by her social worker she was able to heat meals in a microwave. As her condition deteriorated she was no longer able to use the microwave and on several occasions she heated meals for 40 minutes causing the food to virtually ignite. We had to remove the microwave for safety reasons. Regarding question 8, ' I think it is unfair. The proposal is to go from £3.05 customer share, to £7.76 full cost. Why isn't there a proposal for customers to pay an increased share of the cost e.g. £4? My mother's current arrangement with mobile meals works very well. She has carers morning & evening and a hot meal at lunchtime. Please keep the mobile meals service running.
- Thank you so much for the best you are doing to those who need it, I appreciate. You are the best.
- I am happy with the current service and cost.
- Please carry on providing hot meals and I am happy with you.
- Yes, but will the council ensure help is given to the extent that good value meals can be found at affordable prices? What if they do not meet our needs, what would we eat? Surely, getting home care assistance will be more costly for us?
- Generally MOW are good. I don't think they ought to stop.

- Alternative meal provision needs to make sure that someone visits the client's home every day. Sometimes this is the only contact the person has with a human that day to make sure that they are o.k.
- I am currently housebound. It is not safe for me to prepare my own meals. I am not able to go out to get meals from outside. My eyesight is very restricted and I am hard of hearing. I enjoy independent living which is possible only because of the meal service. I rather fear that I may have no alternative other than to seek move to a residential home. My age is 80+.
- Services of 'home care assistances' surely would prove more expensive?? Receiving hot meal from another company. How would this save money? Or does it make any difference to service user? Earlier mobile meals service insisted on healthy food, labels indicated not to re-heat food, emphasis was on Balanced Diet. Surely now a strong contradiction is proposed?
- I am very grateful to council for delivery meals. I am disabled and got fracture on my right arm. Thank you.
- I realise that money is tight and you need to check only people in need receive the meals but they are important to my husband & myself. I am registered blind, crippled with arthritis and have recently suffered several small strokes making mobility very difficult. I rely on my disabled husband for my care and the fact that a cheerful lady brings hot meals to us is such a big help to us and gives my husband a bit of respite on those days.
- The current service is very good & meets my requirements. I do not feel the change would improve the service and I would find it difficult for future.
- When mobile meals were first introduced to Asian people at B. N. Centre. They were done with "not for profit". The food supplied was good quality and lots of green vegetables. Now, it is a case of cheap products, mostly potatoes and pulses. Food is not as a high standard. All this change does not necessarily mean progress -.
- We do need more help by council. To support concession payee for old people meal do not want any changes.
- I would like my meal deliver to me as it is now
- I am a widower living alone. Age 79 years. I am not able to cook as I suffer from Dementia and balancing my movement. It is not possible to cook. Only I hope city council deliver my mobile meals as I getting at present. I do not mind if I am charged for meal about under £5.00. Full cost £7.76 is too much over. Council should give some concession.
- I would prefer that the meals on wheels meals service continue as it is. I am happy to receive a different meal (hot) every day and would continue to pay for the meals once a month.
- I hope that 'help still be given to those who need it' will include continuing mobile meals for those who need it. I would be willing to pay extra towards this service. I cannot cook or prepare meals more than once a week, I am 99 years old.
- Although I have a cooker and microwave, I am unable to operate my microwave. As my sight is limited reading instructions is difficult and I no

longer have the reasoning skills to operate even the simplest appliances.

Stopping this service would affect my daily life. This form was completed by my son on my behalf.

- My mother 91 has to have a soft meal every day, due to Oesophagus stretch. (Not able to eat other type of food). Also not able to use a microwave due to pacemaker and does not have a freezer. The meals and service you provide is " excellent ". All the girls who deliver the meals are very polite and very helpful with taking film off meals. As my mother cannot open meals due to arthritis. The meal service and care that we have in place for our mother means she is able to be in her own home. It would be very sad if this was taken away from her, due to the loss of this meal service.
- I can understand that money is tight and meals should only be given to those who really need them. I can only say that the meals are a complete god-send to my wife and myself. We are both 93 years old and I am my wife's sole carer. I am confined to a wheelchair, having had a leg amputated. I am also diabetic, suffering from prostate cancer, have had triple bypass surgery and been diagnosed with low vision. It would make my already very difficult life even worse if we were to lose the meals. They don't only cut down on shopping/preparing & cooking they provide us with a cheerful friendly face when they are delivered. Please don't stop them.
- To Deb Watson. I have read your proposal and feel sure you have not taken into account all disabled people and in view of my son's care I cannot agree with the proposal to completely stop all mobile meals. (Although in your letter you do say people who are eligible will still receive them.) [My son's] disability keeps him full time in a wheelchair, he cannot stand and has carers during the day, to get him up in the morning, dress, wash or shower, toilet and put him to bed in the evening. I am sure Health and Safety would not allow him to try to prepare meals or even put them in or out of a microwave or cooker. The carer only prepare meals that can be microwaved, (a cooker is not available) and really it is just preparing sandwiches. [My son's] disabilities do not really allow him to assist and he relies on the mobile meals for his hot meal during the day. Before it is suggested I help with his meals, I am 87 and not able to assist. Thank you for your comments and reply.
- I am 94 years old. The meals I get are suitable for my age, health related problems in eating. They do not upset my system, and are varied and serve the purpose of providing one nutritional hot meal a day delivered at home. I am not capable of going through your proposed changes to the current Meals on Wheels service. I find that in my old age I am locked in the four walls of my flat. I am too feeble even to open windows of my flat and as for going out of flat it's impossible as I don't have strength to open my flat entrance door. The only thing left is to enjoy my meal - one hot meal daily and you want to take that away from me. You might as well take my life because I find this too problematic and traumatic. Please kindly provide reply to this.

- Only concern regarding changes is that my mum - already very old and frail - changes to what she is used to, might have to change. Consulting her (I am her son who is looking after her) she says I will have to accept the changes.
- Please provide me with more choice. For I time hot meal.
- Having meals delivered has been a huge help as she has confidence issue shopping in the town, having to put up with the hustle & bustle of people. I do not think she will accept a stranger to do her shopping for her. She tells me that she can cope and cook for herself if I bring her food. I am not convinced, if you view her kitchen, Microwave, Oven are almost in brand new condition & yet must be 10 years old. I will be able to buy the food for her not sure how travelling thru the winter might affect my frequency of visit.
- I am 95 years old. I really need these dinners. As I am unable to get my own. As I can't stand for too long and would be dangerous for me to try.
- I need my Gujarati meal provided to me as it now. I would prefer more choices from other Gujarati organisation.
- My 95 year old Aunt, who uses and relies on this service suffers from Dementia. She would not be able mentally or physically cope with preparing her own meals. We already have 3 carers a day to help cope with day to day activities like washing, dressing and preparation of breakfast and tea. Losing this service would be a nightmare for us. She has no freezer/microwave to prepare meals, and she wouldn't be safe to try. Please reconsider your plans to take away this service on which many housebound people rely on. At 95 my Aunt would not cope with the fast food options you are suggesting - Pizza/Chinese? no thank you. She deserves a good wholesome meal like she is getting now.
- I was really shocked to receive this letter & questionnaire as I am 81 yrs old with diabetes & other health complications. Whereas I can fully understand that council wants to save money but in my opinion, the savings will not help people of my age with a lot of health concerns. I think it is the duty of council to look after the old & infirm people and support them with the best services in general. And food is the main one which help me to survive and keep in good health. I must emphasise that I will get the same quality of food & service from any other provider and hence this note.
- I am happy with the current service of receiving a mobile meal twice a week. I think the amount I contribute is fair too. Would I have to pay extra for a carer to come in and re-heat my meal if this goes ahead?
- I think council should continue with service. Private company will not be any good for providing service as LCC and disable persons will suffer as a result.
- I do not want to complain about anything. Normally the meals I receive for seven days are satisfactory. I have no objection, if you want to make any alteration about the service delivery. Thanks.
- We are satisfied and happy with your meals and service so far.
- Without the M.O.W service I will be struggling as I don't have any other means to get food. I don't mind paying extra charge if your (L.C.C.) service could continue.

- I am 90, house bound and unable to stand unaided. Meals on wheels is an important part of my day. I look forward to the contact with the delivery lady. I would struggle to provide hot food for myself, as I find making breakfast and tea a challenge. Please don't stop my only chance of hot food during the day.
- I am concerned that I may not be able to have a hot meal Mon- Fri as I am diabetic and need my meal at a certain time each day. I would like to continue with my current arrangements I have, as I do not like change, I like continuity.
- I am totally confused and not sure how I would need help, but to respect my time & privacy I prefer to eat out as it gives me an outing & choice in summer but winter time I am not sure with my health. A personal budget to fulfil my requirements is a good idea, as I could choose when & what to eat. Would a home care assistant be able to cook according to my needs? Who would do the shopping? Would I be able to adjust according to the carer's times? My ex is acting as my carer now, would he be able to carry on?
- I have mental health difficulties and am registered blind. I rely on Mobile Wheels as I can't cook independently. I would require hot meals to be delivered by another service or someone to help me prepare a meal. Cost is important as I am on benefits. The current cost is expensive but a good price given the service. Any more would be hard to find however. I understand the need for the change, but in many people's cases the Meals on Wheels service is very important and vibrant to enable independent living.
- I would like the meals to continue, it would be very difficult for me if they stopped as I am on my own. This is being written by my daughter who lives overseas, and is here on a visit. I am 95 this year and I am satisfied with the present arrangement. My freezer would not hold 7 days of frozen dinners.
- The current mobile meal service is already in place, does the job it was put in place for so why change it for such a few people that need it. Surely a new system will cost more. I do not want any change to my meal procedures and I am sure other OAP's will feel the same. This way we get a hot meal of good nutritional value and a pudding with safety and a visit from someone even if for a few minutes.
- Like mobile meal service, it is good but my aunty needs vegetarian Gujarati meals and it should be more tasty and there should be more variety of vegetables.
- Profit over services!! That sounds like our caring Leicester City Council. Particularly when picking on the old the infirm and the most vulnerable. Leave well enough alone. To change or finish meals on wheels I can only see it creating problems for the elderly. They don't need changes they need routine. By cancelling the meals they will need more shopping, (on line won't work) someone to prepare and/or cook the meal, or micro wave a meal. All of this takes more time than having it served as it is now. Changes NO NO NO.
- I think there are many outlets where meals are bought more economically. As such we have to close down the service.

- I would be very upset if the service was closed. I would be extremely grateful if you would continue this service. Many thanks.
- I do think the mobile meals should stay in place for people who really need help as it would benefit. Those don't need help and can manage the food from freezer.
- The quality of the food has improved over the last year or so. The Sunday Roast is probably the worse - the meat is very stringy. I look forward to having a smiling face at the door & a few cheery words each day. It can be very lonely all alone each day. My daughter lives in another part of the city & so only come twice a week to do my shopping. I cannot walk far & it's impossible for me to do the shopping. The most important thing is to have a smiling face each day - it makes no end of difference to welcome someone like xx with a cheerful face and a comment on the weather or some such. It seems at the present time the ladies can't be bothered to have a word with me - it's all in such a rush. My hands are not 'safe' enough after my stroke to take hot food out of my oven as it opens down to the floor & I have difficulty in bending down. On the other hand it would be nice not to have lunch at 11.30 am. I really need meals on wheels to continue.
- I accept these changes are coming. I would need/appreciate help in changing from delivered hot meals to getting in frozen meals. I would like to help to get a freezer and a microwave & help with how to use these. (On the question of value for money of the existing mobile meal, I would judge it's value at about £5.00.)
- I would still prefer to have a hot meal delivered to me each day and would like further information regarding this.
- Without the mobile meals service when I was discharged from hospital following hip surgery, I could not have stayed in my own home. It has been a godsend to me. But now I am better able to care for myself and will probably order direct from Apetito and heat them up myself. I will miss the daily visit of the staff who call however.
- I feel that I should be given the choice to purchase my meals from places that I choose so I can have a varied diet & not the same meals everyday. I also think that I could purchase better value for money meals elsewhere.
- I am disabled and housebound so I need someone to bring me a hot meal Tuesdays & Thursdays.
- Nutrition - Wants food provided to keep him healthy, Nutritional standards, Council to oversee that - we'd go through council, want good standard as they pay, keep people healthy, stomach delicate - balanced - can't digest bad food, not old food etc. - fresh, £3.05 is ok. but lives on pension- don't want to pay too much more, very good from East West, his meal comes quite early but he likes that time, has sore teeth & speech issue, so needs help, want some standard in future, he wants council to organise it, 7 days a week, no other services, his wife is sick, People have been and not offered anything, poor English so hard to speak on phone - people write things down and then do

nothing, - stopped his meals after Indian visit, long time to get started again, said he wasn't eligible, different people "pass the buck".

- It should be possible to pay for the meal only (and not the pudding). Currently it is not possible to pay for the main meal only and the pudding is wasted, as I do not eat the pudding. This is a waste of food and money.
- I can understand that in the modern day meals on wheels is outdated. I never believed it the perfect answer but at least the old and vulnerable were in contact with people and that was the main benefit. As long as good alternative provision is made and users are not just abandoned then the decision is justified. I can't imagine how this support can be ensured so we are very reliant on the authorities to do the right thing.
- Hope the changes won't effect to much because I am not able to walk far only in the house and does not speak English. She would be restricted of food by ordering from restaurant. Can't see or use the telephone is partially blind.
- Need more variety at meals to choose from. I need the right food amount for the money I spend. I do not want less food for the money I pay.
- I am from xxxxx. About 3/4 used to get but now only one/two are getting. Here there are food suppliers with £2.50 and person can take both the times - Noon - Evening. Still left. Hot & fresh. This opinion is mine and only xxx. Thanks.
- Please leave it as it is.
- I need somebody at least 2 times between 12.00 pm & 2pm & 6 to 7 pm to open and serve my meal and help with dish washing & evening meal etc. Can you send a home care assistant for helping me.
- Just that the times of meal, when, come don't change and can come on time. Just keep doing job that council do. Thank U all you hard work.
- I like seeing Sandra my wheels on meals lady during the week, the meals are nice & tasty. I don't know the names of the weekend people. I would miss my meals on wheels service a lot. P.S. Thank you for the Freepost envelope.
- I am of the opinion that the current system of delivering mobile meals is very good and does not need changing.
- If the council want to stop the mobile meals that's it.
- I am happy with the daily meals I get and would prefer the meals to carry on.
- My mother needs this service. She is old and not capable of even putting a meal in a microwave as she is not steady on her feet and has arthritis in her hands also she has serious health problems. If she doesn't get this service she will not have a hot meal.
- I have already replied you earlier in detail of my concerns. I again emphasise that the changes will effect the elderly people badly and as a result unless an alternative is found their health will be effected and deteriorated. I would only suggest that you could cut down fruit and poppadum and yogurt and increased the price by 50p or so. This will indeed help everyone.
- I am elderly and I am happy with the current service. I am unable to prepare meals myself as I have poor eyesight and arthritis this prevents me from

preparing my own meals. I am happy with the current service and it is good value for money.

- xxx is 93-94 next month and these meals are vital for her.
- Written by carer. I believe that the alternative methods (Q2 a) would cost more. From speaking to people who would benefit from Meals on Wheels, some of them do not know it exists. This could well be the reason that you say that fewer meals are being served. Note Green Booklet Page 4 Para 1 & 2 "receive a visit" Much more expensive than present. Page 5 Para 2 "Providing services in a new way....." At a higher cost.
- I have already returned this form once. I cancelled Meals on Wheels some Months ago. I have Wiltshire Farm Foods because it means my carer can heat me a meal when she arrives and I have some choice of the meal on that day. With mobile meals the carer often found it had come but I wasn't eating.
- Think if the MOW service ends an alternative should be available.
- I would like to continue with hot meals every day. If I have to pay the full cost I would expect better value and quality and taste of meals provided. I would prefer to continue with the current service as I am very happy with this.
- Social worker decided xx was not capable of making meals and recommended taking away cooker and so he is reliant on meals being delivered. 7 days a week.
- Continue with home delivery of meals would be better, more choices would be nice, Reduced amount of cooking oil used better.
- The proposed changes would have a devastating effect on my health and well being. I am 94 years old and cannot operate a stove cooker anymore, therefore the proposals would force me to starve. I am very satisfied with the current service and I am sure a lot of us in the community receiving such a service are very grateful.
- I think that in many ways the proposed changes will be a positive step in people's lives. They will have more choice and flexibility in their diets.
- Providing a pick up service for the elderly to transport them to our community centre for their meal has proved a viable and essential support service. Our regular attendance often exceeds 70 senior citizens. The cost of meals has been £3.00 and a £1.00 contribution towards diesel. The service not only provides a nutritious lunch but also serves as a social event combatting loneliness and isolation.
- I have got used to a routine of receiving the meal delivered to me. At my age any disruption or major change will cause unnecessary stress and worry which will impact on my health. My request is to keep your process simple to enable me to continue to get hot meals delivered. Will appreciate your help & support to make this arrangements.
- My father gets his meals delivered on a day when I am able to be there - (I am his carer). By not having someone bringing a meal in would mean I would not be able to work on that day. I rely on someone popping in - if there was something wrong or he didn't open the door I would get a call. Not to happy with proposed changes.

- As an elderly disabled person with family who cannot provide me with support with meals, this service is essential for me to have a good healthy hot meal. The food is balanced, nutritious and healthy. It is also vegetarian and suitable for my religion. The food is as I cooked at home when I was able to. I feel that if the service were to stop it would be detrimental for my health (and that of other service users). I am aware of other sources of Gujarati vegetarian foods like restaurants. Unfortunately this food is not suitable to be consumed on a daily basis as it is over spiced and very oily and therefore bad for health. Receiving this service means that someone pops in on me as well. I would strongly urge you to please keep this service for the older people of Leicester and not to put monetary concerns over their health & wellbeing. Thank you.
- My uncle has no choice but to have meals on wheels. He may be just has good to have meals brought in by another company in the area as he may get more choice.
- I wish current service will continue. We need help from council we need support from council.
- The cost of £3.05 per meal is reasonable and good value for money. I would not be prepared to pay £7.76 for a single meal as it is too expensive and not value for money.
- This is only fair to the people who are able to cook for themselves or prepare their own meals with assistance. For those without this ability the mobile meals service is a lifeline. This minority is likely to be left with no hot meal each day or a poor substitute in the form of a ready meal. In this case if not heated correctly can cause serious illness. It is hard enough to get carers to make a sandwich so would not trust them to heat a ready meal correctly.
- I would like the current system to carry on as I am looking after my mum as I work myself and look after an elderly.
- I think Council meals services are fair. People who need regular meals would still get meals on time. Council meals are taking care to supply meals according to there sickness and health.
- The Council has a big budget of millions of pounds and have started cutting services of older people ie meals and care services. You as a council worker are reading this and your later years (old age) you might need this service yourself. Are this the only way council can save money by targeting the most vulnerable in our society? Every other week we get a letter about some sort of cut's in services from the council. You hardly hear about the cut's to your council tax bills and other rates. For a change lets have a consultation of how Leicester City Council can save money within itself ask yourself are there no other way the city Adult Social Care can save money than troubling our old & sick people. You will be a older person one day and you will be deprived of the very services you want to cut.
- Please keep current service for those who want to use it.
- We assume that he will continue to get the equivalent of meals on wheels in the future as he has a severe mental impairment and cannot cope with any ordering or preparation of a meal.

- I would like a supermarket voucher to stock up on frozen meals. I already have a microwave.
- I would like the hot meal service I receive at present to continue at the cost I am currently paying. It is a reliable service. These meals are delivered by more or else same staff. They know me due to my disability. I have a carer who comes to feed me. It is not easy to time everything.
- I am happy with present meal. I would miss your meals. Good balance for my diet. Other provider do you think would provide good balance meal ??.
- I am filling this form in for xx. I use a Frozen Meal delivery myself so would include xx - unless my condition changes would include xx - also.

MEETINGS WITH TRADE UNIONS

Below are the minutes from three meetings held with trade union representatives:

9th July 2013

Present: Ty Denton (Unite), Jan Dudgeon (Head of Service Passenger and Transport Services), Jane Faulks (Head of Service City Catering), Jagruti Barai (HR advisor), Tracie Rees (Director Care Services and Commissioning), Mercy Lett-Charnock Lead Commissioner Early Intervention and Prevention

Tracie Rees welcomed the group and explained members of the other unions had been invited. Ty suggested there may have been a clash with another meeting. Tracie confirmed no apologies had been received.

The purpose of the meeting was to outline the issues in relation to the provision of mobile meals. She outlined the issues for the service as follows:

The service was for Adult Social Care users who were unable to prepare or obtain a meal. This is not about food but about preparation and delivery. There has been a rapid decline in numbers using the service. Personalisation means that people can choose from a range of providers not just Council services and people are increasingly choosing other options such as home deliveries from supermarkets or personal assistants to support with meal preparation. In addition there is some variation in quality and satisfaction with meals – some being reheated from frozen and some prepared freshly. The Council subsidises the service – each meal costing the Council £4.76 at present and will increase.

Ty asked how much this was due to increase by. Tracie said that we do not have exact figures at this time but forecasts indicate this cost will continue to rise and are becoming unviable.

The Council is starting a public consultation today which runs until 7th October. The proposal is “Stopping the Council’s current mobile meals service and helping people to prepare or obtain meals in alternative and more flexible ways”. Letters are going out today to service users.

There will be staffing implications and potential redundancies for both City Catering and Transport. This is not the start of collective consultation, just a “heads up” about the consultation. It is likely collective consultation will start in September so that views of staff and Unions can be fed into the report to executive, so that they can make an informed final decision which is likely to be in November. Labour Group letters were given out to members last night.

Staff support will come from managers and Amica counselling service is also available. The Heads of Service will brief staff at 1.30pm today and letters will be given to each staff member.

Tracie stressed no decision has been made but the consultation is about closure of the current service.

Ty said this was not good. Tracie said that it was recognised how difficult this will be for staff but evidence is suggesting this is a service people are no longer wanting and other options are meeting their needs.

Ty asked if reducing costs had been looked at. Tracie said that as numbers are going down so fast it's hard to reduce costs as last year the Council subsidised the service by £396k.

Ty asked if the usual provisions were being made for staff. Tracie confirmed the redeployment policy would be applied. There would be possible options for Catering staff within schools and maybe options for Transport staff but compulsory redundancy couldn't be ruled out.

A briefing note was handed out to attendees.

Tracie confirmed the minutes from this meeting and the briefing note would be emailed to union representatives that had been unable to attend.

19 August 2013

Present: Ty Denton (Unite), Gaynor Garner (Unison), Steve Barney (GMB), Jagruti Barai (HR advisor), Tracie Rees (Director Care Services and Commissioning), Mercy Lett-Charnock (Lead Commissioner Early Intervention and Prevention)

Tracie Rees welcomed the group and explained it was being held at the request of the unions. Tracie had held a briefing for unions on 9th July, outlining the rationale for change. We are now in the middle of formal consultation. The issues are around declining numbers and the fact that the Council subsidy of approx. £400k is financially unviable. The proposal is to support people to access alternative services.

Steve asked how the consultation with staff had occurred. Staff were informed via a briefing after the trade union meeting on 9th July. Ty Denton and local reps were in attendance.

Jagruti explained that collective consultation regarding redundancies would not commence until after a decision had been made in November as service closure may not be the outcome. However, we do want staff and unions to feedback on the service proposal – including offering alternative proposals for consideration. This will feed into the executive decision making process.

Jan Dudgeon met with staff on 10th after they had had time to consider the information. Staff have been told how to bring issues forward to feed into the consultation.

There will be a meeting in September for unions again to feed in comments, queries and alternative proposals. Unions are requested to give their availability for week commencing 9th September so this can be arranged.

Gaynor asked about the business case stating that there were alternative posts for redeployment – were there enough? Jagruti said there were. However, some staff have two jobs and therefore the hours may not suit them. This will need considering individually.

Ty asked why the numbers had dropped so dramatically – he did not think this was all due to personalisation alone.

Tracie responded that eligibility criteria are for substantial and critical needs and these are being applied strictly. In addition, people are now being offered direct payments and people are using these to choose options such as personal assistants and this has contributed to the drop.

Steve said that the Council isn't promoting its' own services and this is being used as a way of cutting staff.

Tracie responded that we cannot make service users use Council services, we have to give choice. Steve re-iterated that this should be a balanced choice, not just promoting non-Council services. There should be a balance on promoting Council and non-council services. Tracie confirmed that staff are offering both to service users. The current service is somewhat restrictive in what it can deliver and when. Some people don't like the food and some people don't want a lunchtime meal. Chilled supermarket meals that can be warmed up are a good option for some people. Other people are getting someone in to support them to cook for them.

Steve asked about people with no family who may become malnourished. Tracie explained that the Council has a duty of care and this would not change.

Gaynor asked about other options. Mercy explained this could be a direct payment which would mean people can chose whatever they want. Other options could include an alternative hot meal provider, supermarket meals, a personal assistant or homecare. It would depend on individual need and social isolation would be considered as part of the assessment.

Steve said we would know if people were eating the meal when empty plates were collected but Tracie said the current service does not provide this, empty plates are not collected. Home care is a good option if people need this level of support.

If the proposal is agreed, people will need to be assessed and supported to find an alternative. If people need support they will still get it, it could just be from another provider.

Steve asked if we were using the Council service as a second class option and again asked whether services were being offered equally. Tracie said she had no evidence to the contrary and would like Steve to share this with her if he had any.

Ty requested a full breakdown of the decline in numbers and details of the assessment criteria.

Gaynor asked if unions were present when managers met with staff. They were on the day of the briefing.

Gaynor has requested that when Jan and Jane meet with staff again to invite unions to attend.

Jagruti requested availability for the union meeting in September.

Tracie thanked everyone for their attendance.

16 September 2013

Present: Ty Denton (Unite), Janet McKenna (Unison), Steve Barney (GMB), Jagruti Barai (HR advisor), Jane Faulks (City Catering), Anisha Mistry (City Transport), Mercy Lett-Charnock (Lead Commissioner ASC)

Mercy welcomed the group and explained it was a further opportunity to put forward views or raise questions in relation to the consultation proposal. Tracie Rees had held a briefing for unions on 9th July, outlining the rationale for change and a further meeting had been held on 19th August. Consultation runs until 7th October and there will be a meeting with Catering and Transport staff tomorrow which union representatives are also attending.

Ty said that his concerns were the same as those raised at the last meeting, namely that it wasn't fair as it is felt to not be an even playing field as there is a view that the current service is not being promoted by staff. There is a belief that personalisation is not the only reason for numbers dropping.

Janet asked if we knew why people stopped using the service – did we canvas people's views. Mercy responded that whilst people weren't asked why they stopped using a service, some information was available from their assessment and reassessment information. This was not qualitative as it was as a result of some tick box options but some information could be gathered. Mercy will provide this information as it was gathered for a FOIA request but recalls there was a variety of reasons. Ty asked if any stood out - from memory, Mercy said none did but would provide the information.

As per the last meeting a tighter application of eligibility criteria was also discussed.

Janet asked if Scrutiny had called this in. Mercy said Cllr Moore was informed on 9th July but it hasn't yet been called in but could be at any time.

It was said that there was a rumour the service would be finishing at Christmas. Confirmed an outcome would be known after the report goes to the executive – planned for November. However, implementation would take time so even if the decision was to close the service December would be too early.

Jane said that some of the catering staff expressed an interest in going on to escorting duties, there was also likely to be posts available in catering – short hours particularly. Jagruti confirmed that if a decision was taken to close, consultation on alternatives would start after the executive decision.

Anisha said that some of the transport staff were concerned about the people who get meals as they have a connection with customers due to the delivery. The consultation is about this service ceasing not meals support. The Council will still have a duty to support people who have an assessed need.

Janet asked about the costings as staffing is usually the most expensive element of the service. Mercy confirmed this. The £3.05 contribution from clients was for food, the remainder was other costs.

Janet also queried whether the Direct Payment amount would be sufficient to meet people's need as she couldn't see how the alternative would be cheaper than the current service. Mercy said that there may be several possible alternatives but one of those could be that customers have to pay more.

It was commented that day centres and EPH's as well as mobile meals are political issues and vulnerable people are getting hit.

Steve also raised that there are ways of promoting the service. The council could have carried out a trial of how promoting the service could impact on numbers using the service. Raising the charges could also be considered – if numbers increased the service would be more viable. Had the Council considered increasing the charge?

Jane asked how this would be done as drivers etc. couldn't do this. Steve said it would be assessors (care management staff) that would need to do that.

Steve commented that some service users have good relationships with the people that deliver and without a meal they may deteriorate and could end up costing more. Need to understand the unintended consequences of making the change. Mercy responded as before the Council would still have to provide a service to those that need it. However, Steve was concerned about those who don't meet the criteria now the bar (or eligibility) is perceived to have been set higher. Steve asked if we could guarantee everyone would get a suitable alternative and no one would fall through the gap. Mercy said the Council has a duty to do this and it would be individually assessed and if they were eligible would get an alternative to meet their need. Steve raised a concern about lack of confidence in the assessment process.

Janet asked how service users were consulted and what the response was. Mercy said she thought it was about 30% last time she had been informed and there had been service user focus groups offered as well as 1-1 meetings if people requested it. In addition representative groups such as the 50+ forum, older people's network, disabled customers group and carers reference group were attended. Concern was raised that those attending wouldn't be the vulnerable people who can't get out of the house. However, Mercy said that these groups are there to represent others and we

MM consultation findings report 2013 v 1.3

have had a good response to the survey (numbers wise) and the phone line and questionnaire has given people an opportunity to contact us without having to attend meetings.

Jagruti asked whether the unions would be submitting a written response or whether the minutes of the meetings would suffice. This may vary from union to union so the minutes will be used to feed into the process, along with anything else received.

Mercy thanked everyone for their attendance and confirmed the information requested and notes would be circulated.



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UNISON'S RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSAL TO STOP RUNNING THE COUNCIL'S MEALS-ON-WHEELS SERVICE

There are some concerns from UNISON that there has been a significant decline from 2010 where there was 1,252 people using the service to May 2013 where there are now 269 people using the service. We are convinced that this reduction in service-users is not just down to numbers using the service dropping and personal budgets.

We believe there has been a deliberate attempt not to refer service-users from 2010; this was echoed in the meeting held with the staff on 17 September 2013 affected by the proposals where a number of them expressed concern that social services were telling service-users the meals-on-wheels service had stopped running and that social workers have not been referring service-users to the meals-on-wheels service. There was also an example of a service-user of 18 years told to stop using the meals-on-wheels service.

UNISON have asked why over the last 2/3 years we have not canvassed people's views on why they have stopped using the service. An opportunity has been missed where a marketing campaign could have been launched to promote the in-house service.

UNISON also questions whether the direct payment amount would be sufficient to meet people's needs.

There are concerns over the quality of meals provided in the private sector and the health and safety implications attached to that.

Our in-house meals-on-wheels service goes that "extra mile" with service-users. They observe service-users and in some cases have even stayed with a service-user who needed medical attention. They have often passed concerns on to social services. Can we see the private sector doing that! Nutrition is a big part of the service-users well-being.

It is common for older people to be particularly vulnerable to malnutrition resulting in the prevention or recovery from illness and an increased likelihood of developing more health problems.

Gaynor Garner

(UNISON Social Care and Health Convenor).

MEETINGS 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 1st 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.

xx- 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.

xx 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.

PROVIDER MEETINGS

Meetings were held with current providers. The notes have not been included here, as they contain information relating to the providers' business. Potential impacts of any change were discussed plus business options and concerns the providers may have.