

Executive Decision

Proposal for the future of mobile meals provision

Lead Director: Tracie Rees

31st October 2013

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: City-wide
- Report author: Mercy Lett-Charnock
- Author contact details: 37 2377

1. Summary

- 1.1 On 4th October 2012 the executive gave approval to consult on the future of the Council's mobile meals provision.
- 1.2 The service comprises three elements and all meals are delivered by City Transport:
 - an in-house element provided by City Catering and
 - provision delivered by two external providers
 - East West Community Project (EWCP) and
 - West Indian Senior Citizen's Project (WISCP)
- 1.3 A formal consultation exercise was completed and the executive is now requested to make a decision about the future of the service taking into consideration the findings from statutory consultation and the Council's strategic and financial priorities.
- 1.4 The statutory consultation ran from 9th July to 7th October 2013 on the following proposal:
 - Stopping the Council's current mobile meals service and helping people to prepare or obtain meals in alternative and more flexible ways
- 1.5 The numbers of people using the service has been reducing significantly as eligibility criteria are being robustly applied and people are choosing to use their personal budget to buy alternative services. There are currently only 236 people using the service, reflecting a 34% drop in numbers since April 2012. Consequently the unit cost of providing the service has increased by 43% over the period from 2010/11 to 2012/13.
- 1.6 The consultation has found that many users would like to continue to receive a hot meal and those involved in provision and delivery of the current service are concerned about the quality of alternative options. These issues are addressed in the report.
- 1.7 Information relating to the consultation process and key findings are detailed in the report. However, the overall recommendation is to cease the service as it is no longer financially viable and people's needs can be met in more flexible ways, with indications there are suitable alternative providers and options in the market.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The executive is recommended to approve the cessation of the current mobile meals service with individuals being supported to prepare or obtain meals in an alternative way, organised on an individual basis following an assessment of need as detailed in Option 4.

- 2.2 In order to ensure both the nutritional and social needs of service users are met there will be a number of service options available to people who need support with obtaining or preparing a meal in future. These will be:
- Direct payments (including managed direct payments) to meet their needs in the way they choose
 - Domiciliary care to heat or prepare a meal
 - Support to order meals provision
 - An alternative hot meal delivery (purchased via a Council contracted provider meeting nutritional and quality standards)

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Numbers of people using the service have dropped significantly over the last few years and as demand reduces there are associated costs for City Transport, City Catering and Adult Social Care (ASC). The Council subsidised the service by £396k in 2012/13. The service is becoming financially unviable as costs fall more slowly than the reduction in customer numbers.
- 3.2 As part of the ASC Transformation Programme, the move to personal budgets has meant more service users are choosing alternative meals provision. Demand for the current service has fallen and is forecast to continue falling, resulting in an increasing average cost associated with providing the service. For 2012/13 the average gross cost to the Council per meal was £7.76, representing a total annual gross cost of £607k. If nothing was done, then the average cost to the Council per meal could rise by 50% to around £12 over the next 3 years.
- 3.3 There are currently 236 service users in receipt of a mobile meal, but the number of people using the service has been declining year on year. The decline has been evident for some time, with 168,000 meals being delivered in 2009/10, 159,000 in 2010/11, 112,000 in 2011/12, and 78,000 in 2012/13.
- 3.4 A number of national policy drivers highlight the need for a wide range of services for people which promote independence, choice and control. These include:
- Vision for Adult Social Care 2010
 - Our Health Our Care Our Say 2008
 - Putting People First 2007
 - Think Local Act Personal 2011
- 3.5 A decision is required to ensure we have provision that is fit for purpose and offers value for money, enabling the Council to support people to remain living independently within their own homes.

Consultation Process

- 3.6 Statutory consultation was carried out between 9 July and 7 October 2013 on the future of Leicester's mobile meals service. The proposal that we consulted on was:

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. The

detail of the process can be found at Appendix 1.

Findings summary

3.7 *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 those that responded 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.

- Response: There will still be a hot meal service if that is the option people require to meet their needs.

38% of those who responded feel 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 if it meant a good quality nutritious meal, whereas others could not afford any increase.

- Response: Costs will be considered when planning future options.

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.

- Response: When people have a reassessment it considers all their needs, not just nutritional requirements and social interaction and community involvement are part of that assessment.

A large number 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.

- Response: The Council has a duty to ensure people's cultural, dietary and nutritional needs are met and will take this into account when making any service changes and also in individual cases being reassessed.

3.8 *Trade Unions, staff and stakeholder groups*

The main concern from staff and unions was the suggestion that the Council had been deliberately running the service down. It was also suggested that the reasons why the number had declined were not fully understood.

- Response: To date detailed evidence has not been put forward to support this making it hard to corroborate, however staff have been offering people alternative choices as part of the personalisation agenda but this should be in conjunction with existing services if they meet people's needs. In addition, there may be cases where people are no longer eligible for services. When a list of customers was produced a

couple of weeks prior to the consultation closing (in order to send out reminder letters about the opportunity to be involved) there were 15 new people who had begun the service since the start of the consultation in July, demonstrating that new people are being accepted into the service.

A suggestion was made by the unions that the service should be promoted to increase usage and make it more cost effective.

- Response: The proposal to promote and develop the service has been looked at by the finance team and included in the options. As part of the reviewing exercise, 14 local authorities were contacted and currently 3 of these have in house provision which functions as a trading arm – selling to private customers as well as delivering to eligible users. The majority contract out this provision in addition to offering direct payments (as an alternative to a managed service).

It was felt that there were risks if people went directly to providers who had not been vigorously quality-checked.

- Response: Concerns over commissioned services could be mitigated by a robust contracting process which includes health and safety as well as nutritional requirements. The Council contracted providers will be required to meet the National Association of Care Caterers guidelines. Those who take a direct payment however have the choice to meet their needs in the way they choose and through the reassessment process will be monitored to ensure their needs are being met.

Concerns were raised about isolation and welfare (including nutrition), particularly the benefits of a daily check.

- Response: Where people are eligible and require support other than the meal itself (e.g. support to avoid social isolation), these needs will be taken to account in individual assessments. People's nutritional requirements will be considered and a hot meal from a provider meeting required standards could be organised. However, where service users have capacity, food choices are their own to make.

Concerns were raised about the direct payment amount being sufficient.

- Response: People receiving meals provision currently contribute £3.05, if they continue to do this in future and spend the £2.28 direct payment amount they will have £5.33 to spend on every meal. Soft market testing suggests that meals can be purchased for between £1.48 and £5.95 for frozen meals and £3.60 and £7.71 for a hot meal delivery.

Appendix 2 and 3 contain detailed union and staff feedback.

3.9 *Current providers*

Current providers had concerns about the potential for any change to impact on their business (viability) and as a result other work that they do. A reduction in numbers using services has already begun to have an impact.

- Response: Consideration will be given to the impact on current providers and any mitigating actions that may be required. However, the Council cannot guarantee future business for specific organisations. Information will be provided to prospective users in future and the current organisations could be included on that information.

They felt that information could be given to self-funders about providers which would help them develop their business, but that there could be risks if people chose cheaper options from places without such rigorous checks than they currently go through.

- Response: Information for self funders is being considered as part of the information, advice and guidance strategy and providers can currently market their own services to self-funders and via Choose My Support or in future, an e-directory. People taking a direct payment are able to choose from providers not regulated by the Council but any Council appointed provision would meet quality standards.

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.

- Response: The Council recognises that some meals may be more expensive for customers to purchase, however the food element of a meal is the responsibility of the customer and the Council is responsible only for ensuring a customer is able to obtain or prepare that meal. Soft market testing shows there are providers of culturally appropriate meals available for service users to purchase directly and where the Council is commissioning, it will ensure that value for money but appropriate options are commissioned in future.

- 3.10 A detailed discussion of the financial, legal, equalities and workforce implications of the proposals can be found in section 6 of the report. The Equality Impact Assessment in Appendix 6 of this report describes in detail how the Council might mitigate against negative customer impacts.

Specific alternative proposals made by those consulted

- 3.11 Promote and increase take up of the in house service to improve economies of scale (this may include consideration of increasing cost to service users).
- 3.12 Joining with the County mobile meals provision to improve economies of scale.

The consultation summary can be found at appendix 4.

Soft market testing

- 3.13 At the same time the consultation was underway, a soft market testing exercise was undertaken to establish what provision was available for service users who wanted to use their direct payment to purchase meals as well as what providers are potentially willing and able to contract with the Council if it was required. The findings are included at Appendix 5. In summary, it suggests there are appropriate providers in the market but that in some areas such as providers of Caribbean meals there may be limited choice/availability. However, a procurement exercise would be more likely to receive a response than soft market testing, where there is little incentive for providers to respond. Desk top work and information known informally via lunch clubs and other contracting contacts suggests there are other providers who may be interested in providing meals, that did not respond via this process.

4.0 Options and impacts

4.1 Options These include alternative proposals put forward as part of the consultation.

4.1.1 Option 1. Do nothing. This is not an option because the service is financially unviable.

4.1.2 Option 2. Expand the in house service by actively marketing and attracting people into the service. An increase in numbers would improve the economies of scale and overall viability.

In order to make the service viable it is likely that the cost to service users would be prohibitively high. See section 6.1 below. Also, at present the departments concerned are currently not set up to be able to trade with the public in this way.

4.1.3 Option 3. Merge the service with Leicestershire County provision (shared services). An increase in overall numbers would improve economies of scale and overall viability.

The County does not have an in-house service, instead purchasing its services from an external provider so a shared service option is not possible. However, consideration could be given to a joint contract, however as the County has to factor in more transport costs due to rurality it is unlikely to be more cost effective than having a Leicester City only contract. There is also a need to ensure Leicester's diverse cultural dietary needs can be met through any contracted provision. As a longer term option this could be considered when the County are looking to review their provision but would still require cessation of the current service and elements of option 4.

4.1.4 Option 4. Cease the current provision. Service users would be supported to choose alternative meal support options through the support planning process. There would be 4 commissioning options. Service users could:

- use a direct payment to meet their needs in the way they choose
- receive domiciliary care to heat or prepare a meal
- receive support to order meals provision
- receive an alternative hot meal delivery (purchased via a Council contracted provider).

The Council would undertake a procurement exercise to ensure it has providers of culturally appropriate, high quality meals that meet dietary and nutritional requirements for all those who may need this service.

The advantages of this option are:

- It offers customers choice and control
- It enables the Council to retain some control/responsibility for quality of provision (nutritionally and hygienically)
- It makes savings of £213k
- It has limited financial or qualitative impacts on customers

The disadvantages of this option are:

- A contract for these small numbers still requires requiring procuring and monitoring
- Contracted services don't always offer sufficient flexibility e.g. in delivery times

- Potential for TUPE may limit the number of providers coming forward or increase the cost
- Costs may increase due to reduced numbers using the service

Option 4 is the recommended option.

4.1.5 Option 5. Cease the current provision. Service users would be supported to choose alternative meal support options through the support planning process. There would be 4 commissioning options. Service users could:

- use a direct payment to take maximum control for their service
- use a managed direct payment to enable choice and flexibility without the responsibility for organising and managing the process
- receive domiciliary care to heat or prepare a meal
- receive support to order meals provision

This option is similar to option 4 but instead of the Council purchasing meals via a contract for those who cannot have their needs met appropriately using other options, customers would be able to use a managed personal budget.

The advantages of this option are:

- It offers customers choice and control
- It enables the Council to fully implement the personalisation agenda by withdrawing from formalised contacting arrangements
- It requires less Council resource procuring and monitoring
- It makes savings of approximately £206k

The disadvantages of this option are:

- Some customers may still not want a direct payment even if managed on their behalf
- The Council relinquishes control over quality and nutritional standards
- Costs for customers are likely to increase in “like for like” options as the Council will no longer be subsidising the service – however their needs can be met in other ways for a lower cost if they chose this
- Slightly lower estimated savings than option 4

Impacts

4.2 Customer financial impacts. The preferred option (option 4) will have different financial implications depending on people’s circumstances and what option they require going forward. Assumptions have been made about likely replacement services. It should be noted that whilst assumptions have been based on current package types and alternatives available, the actual outcome will be based on individual assessments.

4.2.1 Having applied the assumptions, it is likely to result in the following hypothetical financial impacts:

It is estimated that out of the 236 current mobile meals recipients 220 (93%) will pay no more than they do currently; 16 people (7%) are expected to pay more. This is based on applying assumptions about the future services that people will receive, along with information from financial assessments for the 70% who have had them.

4.2.2 Using information about the expected services that people will receive, and the outcomes of financial assessments already undertaken, it has been possible to estimate the additional future contributions as ranging from zero to £15. Appendix

7 reflects this in further detail.

4.2.3 It should be noted that it is possible some people could pay more than £15 extra per week but this would be as a consequence of people who currently do not require home care receiving a half an hour home care call as a replacement service for each meal. In practice, this is an unlikely commissioning decision (unless someone's needs had increased in which case that isn't the impact of the review implementation but of changed personal circumstances) and it is more likely that a customer would request an alternative service to avoid such a charge.

4.2.4 It is also possible that some people may no longer require a meal following a reassessment. This could be due to them having only required the meal for a time limited period, or due to improved circumstances meaning they are no longer eligible for services. This will be subject to individual assessment.

4.2.5 In addition, there are two groups of people who may be better off as result of the change if option 4 was implemented.

4.2.6 There is the possibility that people could benefit if they are able to purchase the actual food themselves for less than £3.05 a meal. This could apply if a person:

- received no replacement service and instead sourced ready meals from a supermarket, then there is the possibility they could get these for less than the £3.05 they currently pay.
- had frozen meals delivered by a supermarket (or a family member) and then received a home care call to reheat these, then they could save money by paying less than £3.05 for the frozen meal itself. (Any contribution towards the home care call would offset any savings for the individual, but based on current information we know most will not pay for the home care).

4.2.7 Where people take a direct payment they would effectively have £5.33 to have their need met (£2.28 direct payment amount plus £3.05 contribution). If they are able to arrange a delivered meal for less than this then they could free up money to meet other eligible needs. Appendix 8 shows case study impacts for service users.

4.3 Customer "other" impacts.

4.3.1 There is the potential for qualitative impacts for some customers. For those who currently get a fresh meal delivered (those who receive Gujarati or African/Caribbean meals) and also get domiciliary care a likely alternative option in future would be for the care visit to be extended so that meal support can also be offered. In these cases, service users are likely to have a chilled or frozen meal reheated which they may perceive more negatively than when they had fresh provision. However, service users could choose a direct payment in order to continue the same meal type if it was preferable.

4.3.2 All customers will be reassessed and supported to find alternative options. It is possible that some will no longer be eligible and in this case people will be signposted to alternative options that people can organise themselves or with the support of family. Reassessments will also include an assessment of people's need for social interaction and ensure that need is met with appropriate support planning.

4.4 **Workforce impacts.** This will be dependent on the option chosen, if the decision is to close the service then all posts would be deleted and post holders would be

redundant. If it is one of the other options, there may be TUPE implications. See further information below on TUPE. These changes are likely to have an impact on employee relations and staff morale. See section 6.4 below for further detail.

4.5 **Provider impacts.** For both external providers, loss of a contract would have an impact on their viability and provision of other services. However, both responded to the soft market testing exercise and are potentially willing to continue to provide services privately or as part of a contracted service with the Council. Both currently have private customers and would also be looking to develop this area further. Internal provider impacts are covered in the workforce impacts above.

4.6 **Council financial impacts.** See section 6.1 below. In summary, this option (option 4) will enable the Council to achieve approximately £213k savings per year based on current projections (please note these are only an estimate and final savings will be based on individual choices and options).

4.7 **Equalities impacts.** See section 6.3 below. In summary, some service users may pay more in future and by nature of who the service serves, this impacts on older people and those with disabilities. Depending on meal type chosen, there may also be a disproportionate effect on those using a direct payment to purchase a fresh African/Caribbean meal or Kosher meal as these appear to be more expensive. At present this only affects a small number of people (twelve). If these users continued to have a meal from the Council framework this would be charged at a flat rate and the impact would be removed.

4.8 **Other impacts.**

4.8.1 The Council will need to ensure robust project planning so that during the transition no one “slips through the net”, that is to say that we ensure current customers are tracked and that a suitable alternative is in place before existing provision ceases. This will be part of the reassessment work stream. Where service users fall out of eligibility the Council needs to provide good reasons for the withdrawal and ensure an individual’s needs are not worsened by that withdrawal. Workers should also ensure they have information on appropriate alternatives.

4.8.2 There is a need to undertake a procurement exercise to ensure we have alternative hot meals provision. This will only be for a relatively small number of people. Therefore it is possible that economies of scale mean providers will not be able to offer competitive pricing. However, indicative findings suggest this will not be the case. See the soft market testing at appendix 5 for more detailed information. Linked to this procurement is potential TUPE risk – highlighted in section 6.2.

5. Tell us how this issue has been externally scrutinised as well as internally?

5.1 ASC Leadership Team.

5.2 ASC Scrutiny (due) 20th November 2013.

5.3 The following stakeholders were also informed of the consultation with the opportunity to provide their views and those of the people they represent:

- Elected Members and Local Members of Parliament
- Trade Unions and staff at the in house service (transport and catering)
- The two external providers

- The general public via the Council website
- Forum for Older People
- The Carers Reference Group
- The 50+ Network
- Discuss (Disabled Customers Group)
- Leicester Centre for Integrated Living (LCIL)
- Age UK
- Alzheimer's Society
- Healthwatch

6. Financial, legal and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

- 6.1.1 The budgeted saving for the mobile meals service is £158k in 13/14, rising to £248k from 14/15 onwards.
- 6.1.2 Based on the forecast cost and number of meals, the average gross cost per meal for 13/14 is expected to be in the region of £8.70. Over the last 3 years the unit cost has increased by an average of 17% per annum. It is forecast that the unit cost could rise to around £12 over the next 3 years. Department of Health guidance (Fairer Charging) restricts the extent to which the charge to eligible customers could be raised to cover this increasing cost, since the charge can only 'substitute for ordinary living costs'.
- 6.1.3 Option 1 of doing nothing is not financially viable since it would lead to rising costs and not deliver against the savings target. It does not represent good value in meeting customer needs.
- 6.1.4 Under Option 2, if the number of meals being delivered could increase through selling to self-funders then the unit cost would fall. PSSRU (Personal Social Services Research Unit) has estimated that self-funders number around a third of the eligible customers supported by Local Authorities. Financial information in relation to Option 2 has been requested from Education and Children's Services to establish the likely fall in unit costs, but at this stage it is considered unlikely to reduce significantly. This is because it would be necessary to charge self-funders a much higher rate (perhaps the full cost), which would be prohibitively expensive for many.
- 6.1.5 Under Option 3, the contractual arrangements of the County would need to be explored further to establish whether joint contracts could significantly reduce costs. Transport costs would likely be much higher in the County and the types of meal being delivered be less varied. This could increase the complexity of such a contractual arrangement, and reduce the potential savings.
- 6.1.6 Option 4 of contracting out the mobile meals service would lead to annual savings in the region of £213k. There would be additional costs incurred in terms of staff time spent on the procurement process and the on-going monitoring of contracts. The actual savings would be determined by the outcome of each assessment and the selection of any replacement services.
- 6.1.7 Option 5, involving an increased use of managed direct payments to meet people's needs would lead to annual savings in the region of £206k. As with Option 4, the actual savings would be determined by the outcome of each assessment and the selection of replacement services by each customer.

6.2 Legal implications

6.2.1 Community Care Law

Legal advice has been sought on the implications for service users from a Community Care Law perspective and consideration needs to be given to the Council's public law duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when undertaking assessments of need and considering suitable alternative provisions for service users subject to their individual needs. The Local Authority also must bear in mind its legal obligations as prescribed under section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983 which provides for provisions without charge to the service user, Sections 2 (1) (a), 2 (1) € and 2 (1)(g) under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Act 1970 in respect of the provision of meals for disabled persons and the Health Service and Public Health Act 1968 section 45 (DHSS circular 19/71) which makes provision for meals and recreation in the home or elsewhere for elderly persons. A failure to adhere to these duties could result in a legal challenge by way of judicial review.

Legal advice should continue to be obtained as and when necessary.

Pretty Patel
Principal Lawyer, Social Care and Safeguarding

6.2.2 TUPE Implications

All five options proposed are likely to result in employment law implications either by way of changes to terms and conditions, redundancy and/ or transfers of staff either in or out of the Council under the transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) ("TUPE") Regulations 2006.

It is advised that Legal Services are consulted throughout to ensure that the Council complies with its legal obligations and to ensure that the risk of claims is minimised.

Hayley McDade, City Barrister

6.2.3 Contracts Law

The conflicting consideration with public procurement law is in respect of the statutory Best Value Guidance 2011 and the public law duties in accordance with S149 as mentioned by my work colleague above. This impacts upon the reduction or cessation of services as per the recommended Option 4. Not complying with these obligations will place the Council at a high risk of a public law challenge. I understand the first part of the consultation process has already been concluded.

If it is agreed to implement Option 4 then, the client must serve 12 weeks' written notice to terminate the Service, to continue with the application of the Best Value Statutory Guidance. This notice period is not aligned in the original contracts signed back in 2009.

Nimisha Ruparelia
Commercial Contracts Solicitor

6.3 Equalities Implications

Of the current 236 users of the mobile meals service, the main relevant protected characteristics influencing their needs are age, disability, race, religion and belief, and gender. Over the past few years users of the service have increasingly chosen to leave the service and source their meal requirements in other ways. The remaining users have expressed a range of concerns about potentially negative impacts that ending the current service will have: loss of social contact; concern about continuing to have their nutritional and cultural/religious food needs met to the same level; and continued provision of a hot meal. The recommended proposal aims to address these negative impacts through a range of mitigating actions that will enable the service user to choose the most appropriate options for themselves which best meets their meal needs and suits their practical arrangements.

Irene Kszyk - Corporate Equalities Lead

6.4 HR Implications

- 6.4.1 If the proposal is approved there will be 19 staff (8.93 FTE) that would be affected. There will be no requirement for redundancy selection as it is proposed that all City Council posts involved in the mobile meals service are to be deleted and therefore the post holders would be compulsorily redundant.
- 6.4.2 It is envisaged that there may be a possibility to offer the catering staff suitable alternative employment within the schools catering service. Similarly there may be suitable vacancies in PATS which may be offered as suitable alternative employment. It is also proposed that voluntary redundancy will be offered within the PATS service area that could be considered as a release for "bump-on" if there are no vacancies available.
- 6.4.3 If the proposal is approved and failing the above strategies, qualifying affected employees will be placed on the redeployment list. This will afford them the support of a redeployment officer who will assist them to apply for suitable alternative employment and offer guidance around redundancy payments and rights if applicable. They will also be offered support through the Council's outplacement service and AMICA.
- 6.4.4 Following the consultation process, if the proposal is approved, staff that do not secure alternative employment either in the same service or through redeployment will be identified as redundant. Any subsequent dismissals would be on the grounds of redundancy with the required notice period.
- 6.4.5 Any dismissals will be effected by the issue of notice of termination giving the relevant statutory or contractual notice period, whichever is greater.

Jagruti Barai – HR Advisor

7. Background information and other papers:

4th October 2012 Future of Mobile Meals executive report

8. Summary of appendices:

EIA 2013

- Appendix 1 Consultation approach
- Appendix 2 Staff feedback
- Appendix 3 Union feedback
- Appendix 4 Consultation findings
- Appendix 5 Soft Market Testing
- Appendix 6 Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix 7 Financial analysis
- Appendix 8 Customer Scenarios

9. Is this a confidential report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

10. Is this a “key decision”?

Yes

Appendix 1 - Consultation Approach

Statutory consultation was carried out between 9 July and 7 October 2013 on the future of Leicester's Mobile Meals service. The proposal that we consulted on was:

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

Comments were invited on the proposals from people who receive mobile meals, their families and interested parties. The following methods were used.

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 as only one person took up this opportunity. 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

The documentation was provided 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, including Healthwatch and Age UK, inviting them to take part in the consultation. Various forums were also consulted, such as the 50+ Network, Carers Reference Group, Discuss (Customer User group) and Forum for Older People. Each Leicester City councillor and MP was also written to about the proposal. Cllr Lynne Moore was also written to in her role as chairperson of the Adult Social Care & Housing Scrutiny Commission Chairperson.

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 the Council via this means if they wished.

Letters to and meetings with current providers

The two current external 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 and they were invited to submit further responses if other issues came up as a result of the meeting.

Staff and trade unions

Meetings were held with staff of the internal services (catering and transport) and trade unions and their views gathered.

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 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.

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.

Appendix 3 – Trade union feedback

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 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).

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.

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

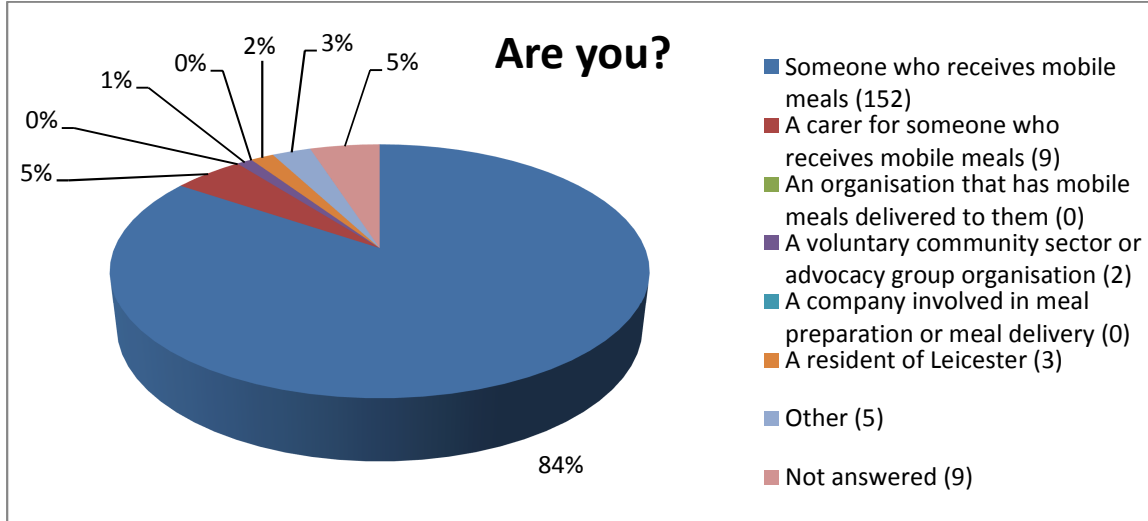
Current providers had concerns about the potential for any change to impact on their business and other work that they do as a result. They felt that information could be given to self-funders about providers, but that there could be risks if people chose cheaper options from places without such rigorous 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

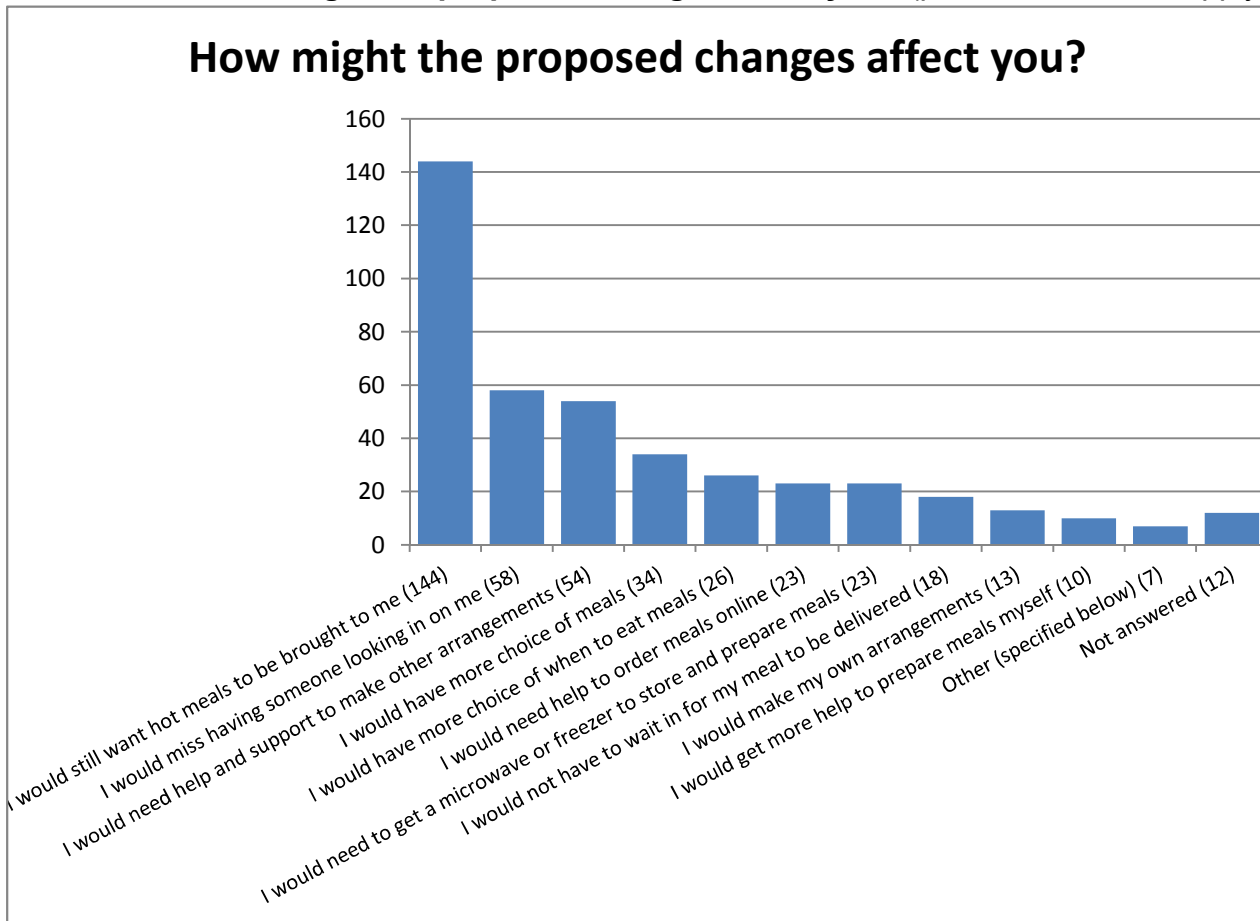
Questionnaires

- 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)

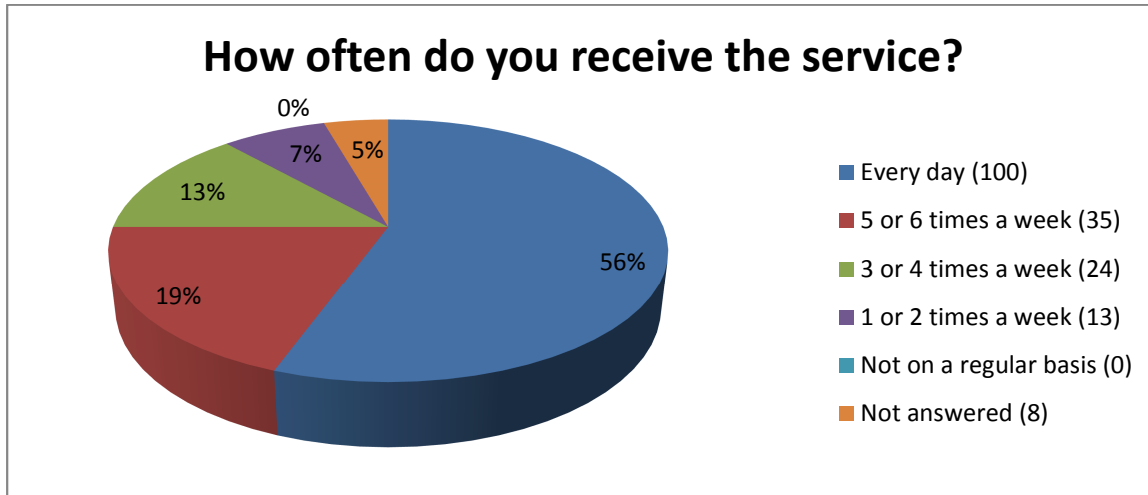


“Other:”

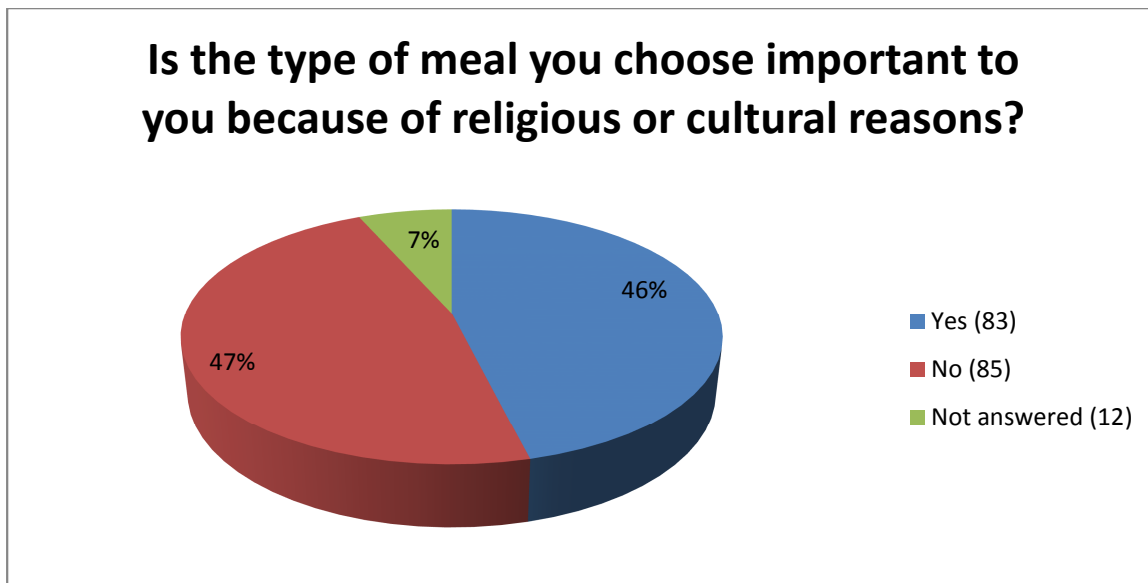
- My body is feeble. My mouth cannot chew hard crispy food. The meals I get currently are nourishing. I do not want change.

- 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?

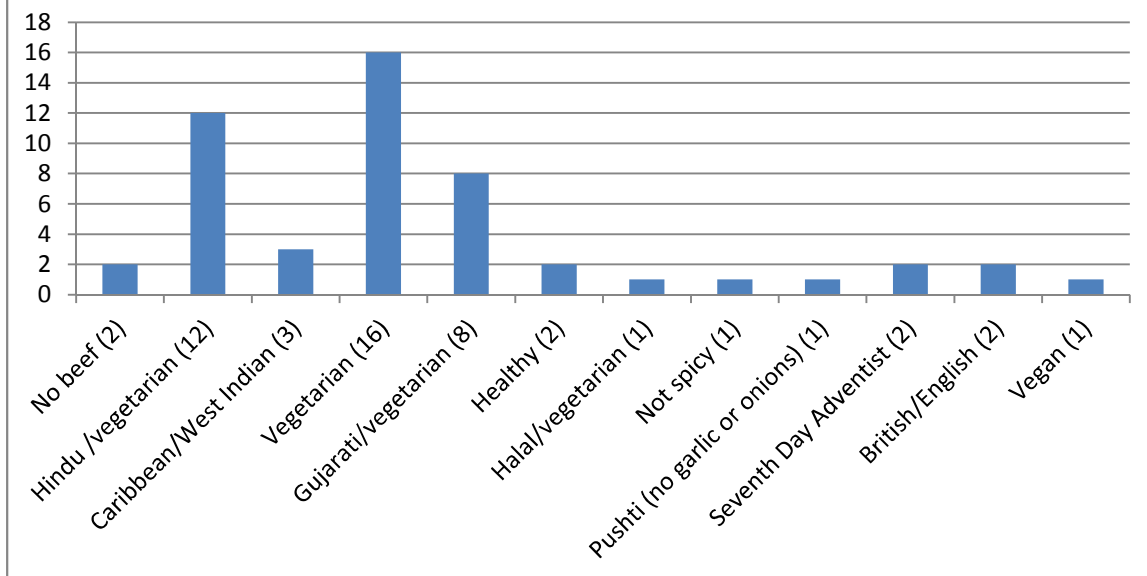


Question 4 – Is the type of meal you choose important to you because of religious or cultural reasons?



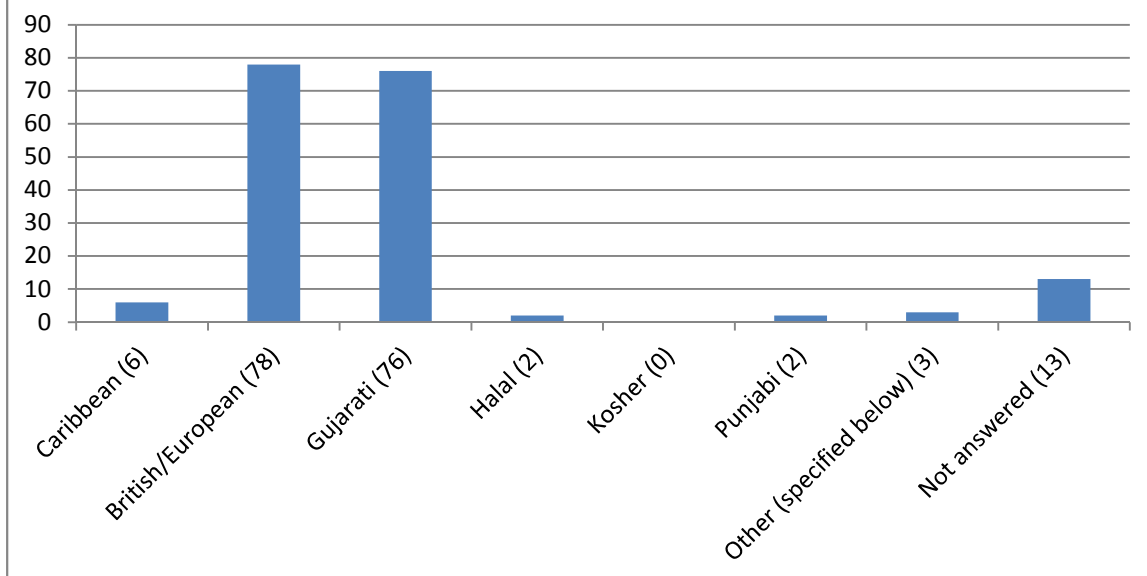
Summary of reasons given for why the type of meal is important:

Summary of reason why (where specified)



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

What type of meal do you normally choose?

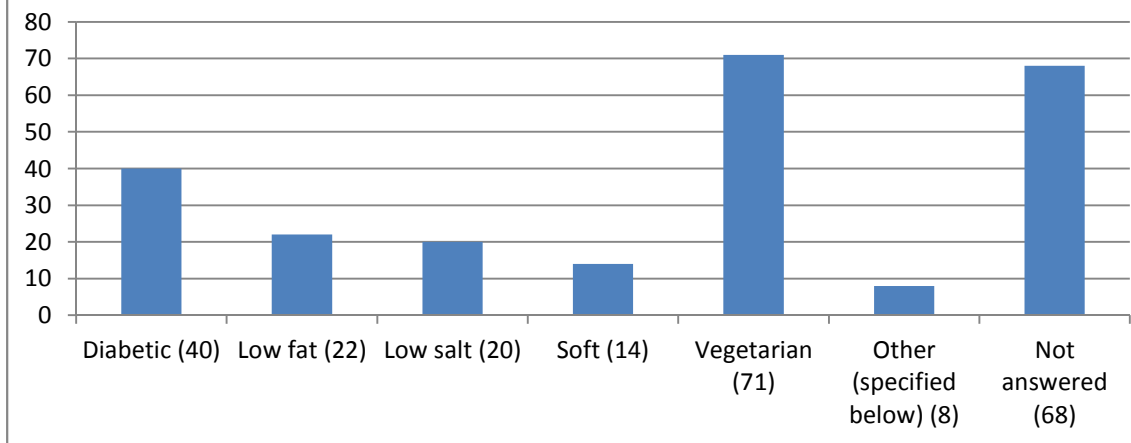


Other types of meal:

- 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)

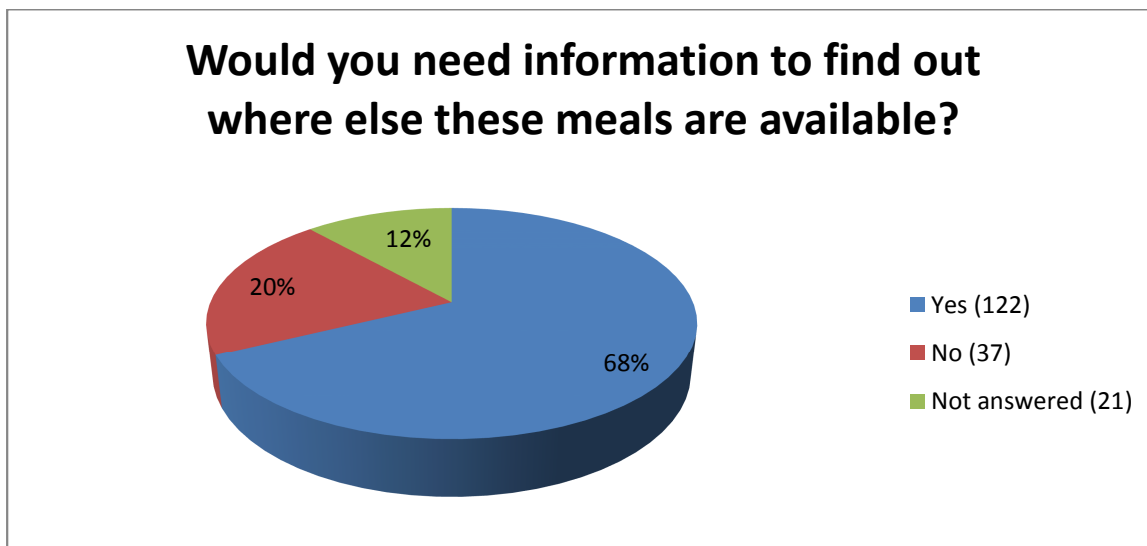
Do you require any of the following meals for health reasons?



Other meals specified:

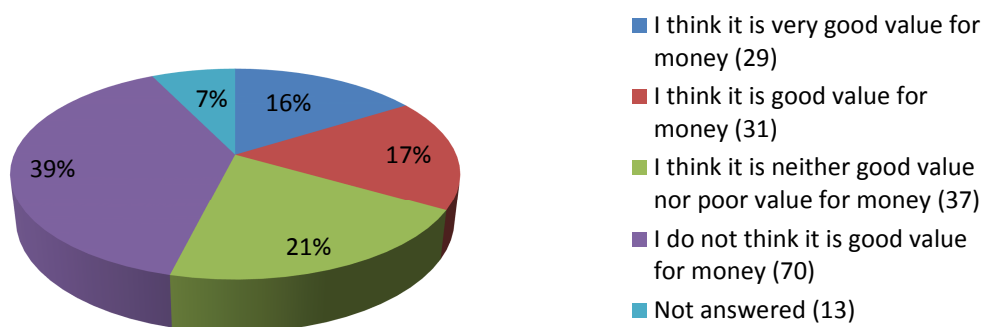
- Less oily, not spicy, chilli and not rich. I have simple meals as my stomach gets upset easily
- Specially extra mild
- Pureed
- Mild meals with no chilli
- Asthmatic, underweight
- Vegan

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?

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

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. • Council staff are seen as too expensive. • Concerns of health, safety and hygiene of other providers.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

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Telephone: 0116 252 8301

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 be 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
EIA 2013

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 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.

17. Staff will be losing jobs

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. BB queried why consultation did not take place when there were more service users.

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. 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.

24. It was also raised that all budget cuts of late are affecting the old and vulnerable.

25. 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.

26. 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.
27. 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.
28. 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.
29. 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.
30. 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.
31. Concern was also raised about Health & Safety and hygiene of any alternative providers.
32. 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:

8. Even though there has to be money cut backs why does it have to be in the old and vulnerable?
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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!
12. 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.
13. 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?

14. 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.

Executive Briefing

September 2013

Soft Market Testing - Community Meals

Lead director: Tracie Rees



Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Adult Social Care Procurement
- Author contact details: 37 2319
- Report version number: v2

1. Summary

Soft Market Testing (SMT) exercise – Community Meals (aka Mobile Meals, Meals on Wheels)

- 1.1 To report findings of the Soft Market Testing (SMT) for Community Meals.
- 1.2 Assessing the range of respondents it could be summarised that the prospects for the Council of encouraging operators to express an interest through the procurement/tendering process are good.
- 1.3 All those that responded could demonstrate a positive track record of providing meals service and can deliver all type of meals including African, Asian, European and Kosher, 365 days a year.
- 1.4 It is to note that some providers are able to provide more additional services including general checking on customers' well-being, serving meals, take out rubbish and prepare hot drinks.
- 1.5 Following the SMT, the Project Board may wish to take up the opportunity to invite respondents to further dialogue to assist future decision on procurement of the service. The procurement exercise can incorporate views of SMEs, voluntary sector and others respondents of the SME exercise.

2. Background:

2.1 In line with the principles of Self Directed Support, the Council implemented fundamental changes to its ways of working in April 2010. The new way of working requires that following an assessment of need and subsequent establishment of eligibility a customer is advised of their indicative allocated resource through the use of the Resource Allocation System (RAS). The customers then should have a choice in how they wish to choose meals provision in accordance with their own choice and assessed needs.

2.2 The Council's aspiration is that a customer will have a range of choices available to them and will be supported to support plan either by themselves or with support from another party including Care Management in Adult Social Care (ASC).

2.3 The service currently delivers to approximately 260 people providing culturally-appropriate, nutritious meals 365 days a year.

2.4 Existing providers prepare meals that reflect the origins of the service user and

their cultural needs. All meals are produced under strict hygiene conditions and practices as laid down by law, enforceable by the local Environmental Health Department. All meals meet nutritional standards established by local or national recognised bodies.

2.5 There are currently two external providers based in the community and voluntary sector and one in-house provider. Currently, all meals are transported by an in-house provider.

2.6 The future of the current mobile meals service is being consulted on and the department is seeking to establish whether suitable alternative provision is available in the market.

3. Purpose of Soft Market Testing

3.1 The overall objectives of the exercise were to assess whether there is potential in the market from suitably qualified and experienced providers to achieve Council's outcomes, which are:

- a) To help Customers maximise their options
- b) To determine if there is market interest in providers delivering meals to those in receipt of a managed personal budget
- c) To determine what barriers there are to doing this (e.g. transport, meal types, charges, location, frequency, volume)
- d) To determine level of interest in different contract types including framework contracts with no guarantee of hours
- e) To establish what providers can do – meal types, frequency, delivery times, locations, food only, prices etc.
- f) To identify any gaps in market provision
- g) To determine what is available for people in receipt of a Direct Payment

4. Process

4.1 The SMT was advertised on 26th July 2013 via Source Leicestershire. It was made clear to the market that it was not a call for competition.

4.2 All current providers for variety of Adult Social Care services had been notified (Voluntary Sector including current Mobile Meals providers; Care Homes, Domiciliary Support Services; Independent Living). Notifications were also sent to providers who expressed interest previously. Members of Federation for Small Businesses and Voluntary Action Leicestershire had also been notified.

4.3 The closing date for submission of responses was 9th September 2013. A total of seven responses to the SMT were received.

4.4 Type of Operators:

The legal status of the organisations who submitted responses is as follows:

- a) Public Limited Company / Registered Charity: 2
- b) Charity with Trustees: 1
- c) Charitable Organisation limited by Guarantee: 1
- d) Private Limited Company: 2
- e) Partnership: 1

4.5 Experience / Suitability of Providers:

All Providers have given details of their current activities including additional well-being services, capacity of providing community various type of meals, current take up, price and ability to deliver meals.

5. Analysis of Responses

5.1 Type of Meal

Four providers cater for clients from a variety of cultural backgrounds (European, Asian, African-Caribbean, Halal etc.), whereas three of the have stated provision of meals for a specific client group only. In terms of special diets, all respondents are able to provide meals for Diabetic clients, Vegetarians and Pureed/Soft or other form of Texture modified meal. Some are also able to supply the following: Milk Free; Gluten Free; Low/ No Added Salt; Egg Free; Low Fat; Energy Dense.

It must be noted that two of the respondents are only currently able to provide frozen meals.

5.2 Premises and Food Hygiene Rating

All but one respondent have confirmed that their premises are approved and inspected. One organisation did not provide the answer.

Three respondents have confirmed food hygiene rating of 5, two – 4 and two have not provided a response.

5.3 Meals Availability

Five respondents have confirmed that they can deliver meals 365 days a year. One, who provides frozen meals, can supply them to a transport provider's facility every week. Another respondent does not provide services during weekends and Christmas, however, can provide alternative frozen meals for these periods.

5.4 Price

The SMT questionnaire asked respondents to provide price for their meals and applicable delivery charge.

Two providers who only supply frozen meals quoted prices ranging from £1.48 to £2.65 for standard meals and up to £5.95 for cultural meals.

Prices provided by the remaining five respondents were as follows:

- a) Standard meal from £3.60 to £7.56
- b) Asian Vegetarian from £5.25 to £7.71
- c) African-Caribbean from £6.71 to £7.71
- d) Halal from £6.71 to £7.71
- e) Kosher £12.09 (frozen option available from £6.45)
- f) Other special diets (diabetic, low salt, texture modified etc.) from £5.25 to £7.56 (frozen options available from £1.60)

All prices include delivery.

5.5 Additional Services

The respondents have listed a number of additional services provider whilst delivering

the meal, including:

	Organisation A	Organisation B	Organisation C	Organisation D	Organisation E	Organisation F	Organization G
General checking on customer's wellbeing/cause for concern	✓	✓	✓	✓	☐	✓	✓
Offer a drink of water	✓	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐	✓
Remove lids from meals	✓	☐	✓	☐	☐	✓	✓
Plate up meals	✓	☐	✓	☐	✓	☐	✓
Cut up meals	✓	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐	✓
Bring in items from the doorstep	✓	☐	✓	✓	☐	☐	☐
Take out rubbish	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dispose of container or lid	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐	☐
Help with menu planning	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐	☐
Get seasonings, cutlery, clean tea towel	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐	✓
Smell gas	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐	☐
Heating working	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐	☐
Make hot drink	☐	☐	✓	✓	☐	☐	☐
Best before' dates checked	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tripping hazard	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐	☐
Post letters	☐	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐
Place meal in the freezer or microwave	☐	☐	☐	✓	☐	☐	☐
Safe, Warm and Well checks'	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	✓

✓ additional charge

Organisation B and E provided very limited responses, it is possible that they provide more additional services, but failed to include these in the SMT response. Organisation C provides wide range of services, beyond the above listed, however, these attract additional charge.

5.6 Capacity and Current Take Up

Most providers are able to provide from 50 meals per day to 1000+meals. Providers are providing meals from 30 to 125 per day. Frozen meals are provided in bulk as required by the customers.

6. Options

The SMT questionnaire asked respondents their views on the most effective option for the delivery of the service. They were presented with 3 examples, but there was an opportunity to present the Council with a completely new solution. The 3 options were:

- A. A single service provider to prepare and deliver all types of Community Meals (Mobile Meals). Provision covering all Customer Groups across Adult Social Care (single provider undertakes service delivery).
- B. A framework of multiple specialist providers to prepare and deliver Community Meals (Mobile Meals) covering all customer groups of ASC (potential providers

could undertake this for one or more of the type of meals provision).

- C. A framework of multiple specialist providers to prepare only Meals covering all customer groups of ASC (potential providers could undertake this for one or more of the type of meals provision).

One of respondents, who currently provide frozen meals, opted for proposing an option not listed above. Their suggestion was for them to deliver frozen meals to in-house or external transport provider for distribution.

Out of the remaining 6 respondents, those able to provide a wide range of cultural meals stated preference for option A. above, i.e. single provider service. The organisations specialising in only one culturally appropriate type of meal (Gujarati, African-Caribbean, European) expressed preference in having a framework of multiple specialist providers, who both prepare and deliver meals (option B).

7. Issues for Consideration

- The current mobile meals provider (that is the organisation who provides the meals for the in-house provider to reheat) would not be in position to deliver hot meals direct to customers in Leicester City, due to not having facilities in the area and an inadequate volume of meals indicated.
- There are alternative providers who can prepare and deliver nutritionally well balanced and culturally appropriate hot meals if frozen meals are discontinued in future.
- Limited providers came forward to provide African- Caribbean and Kosher type of meals.
- Higher unit costs for African – Caribbean and Kosher meals provision.
- One of the Charity organisations is able to provide Customers breakfast and tea packs and can also explore delivery times offering service in the late afternoon or early evening (offering choice to Customers).
- There is a potential risk around TUPE – although this is low and advice from the legal team has been sought.

3. Details of Scrutiny

One of the objectives of the SMT was to establish what providers can do to provide various types of meals, frequency and price of meals. The SMT has been external scrutiny by providers who have responded and internally the Mobile Meals Project Board, Transformation Team including Contracts and Quality Assurance Section scrutinised to achieve the Council's outcomes.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The financial allocation for mobile meals provision is yet to be determined.

5.2 Legal implications

Not arising from this report.

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

This report does not contain any significant climate change implication. However, the proposed tendering of the mobile meals must consider it to ensure the meals service provision must not have a detrimental effect on the Council's climate change targets. Issues to consider are packaging and transporting of meals.

5.4 Equality Impact Assessment

The Mobile Meals Service provision must considers issues as stated below:

- Ensuring culturally appropriate meals are available.
- Ensuring customer choice.
- Ensuring meals reflect any dietary requirements.
- Ensuring vegetarian meals are being prepared in appropriate facilities where no meat and being handled and they are stored and transported appropriately,
- Ensuring meals are fresh and nutritious and ingredients used are responsibly sourced.

5.5 Other Implications

Impact on customers currently in receipt of the service.

6. Background information and other papers:

None.

7. Summary of appendices:

- (i) Soft Market Testing Questionnaire – Community Meals



SMT MoW final.doc

Appendix 6

Equality Impact Assessment for Service changes / Budget proposals

An EIA is a tool which will help you assess whether there are any positive or negative equality impacts on people affected by proposed changes requiring formal decision.

Service change involves redesigning or reshaping, (and in some cases the removal of) current service provision – whether directly provided by Council officers or commissioned by the Council for provision by an external provider.

Budget proposals should arise from service changes that you are considering throughout the year in light of the current financial climate. The EIA for budget proposals should cover the same issues as considered for service changes.

Our public sector equality duty requires us to ensure that we do not discriminate against any protected group or person with protected characteristics (see below) covered by the Equality Act 2010 when taking decisions that affect them. Potential negative impacts that we disregard or ignore could mean discrimination. We also have a duty to actively promote positive impacts that advance equality of opportunity. The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

What to do: The service change / budget proposal EIA contains 3 steps:

Step 1 The proposal

This part of the EIA examines the proposed change to the service and potential equality impacts takes place at the start of the planning process.

Step 2 Consultation

This part of the EIA covers the outcome of the consultation with service stakeholders about service change proposals.

Step 3 The recommendation

The final part of the EIA presents the recommendation for decision along with potential positive and negative equality impacts of the recommended action.

Any issues identified in the above EIA process requiring action should be addressed in a SMART EIA action plan.

Remember to keep your supporting information and analysis as your evidence base (including any needs assessments informing the start of the planning process) in case of challenge to the contents of your EIA, your interpretation of the evidence used to support the EIA, or your interpretation of protected groups affected.

Appendix 6

Equality Impact Assessment for service changes / budget proposals

Name of service	Mobile Meals – review implementation
------------------------	---

Date of assessment:

Start date	Completion date
01-10-2013	23-10-2013

Lead officer and Contact details	Mercy Lett-Charnock Contact: 37 2377
List of other(s) involved	Jagruti Barai – HR Advisor Irene Kszyk – Corporate Equalities Lead

What is this EIA about?

(Please tick✓)

Budget proposal for existing service or service contract to achieve savings	
Budget proposal for new or additional service expenditure	
Budget proposal for capital expenditure	
Commissioning a new service or service contract	
Changing or removing an existing service or service contract	✓

Step 1: The proposal (how you propose to change the service)

Question 1:

What is the proposal/proposed change?
The proposal is to cease the current mobile meals service and provide meals in more flexible ways. The current mobile meal service has two components, meal preparation and a delivery service. The delivery service is provided by the Council's Passenger & Transport Service (PATS), via a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Adult Social Care. In terms of the meal preparation, City Catering re-heats re-generated frozen food for the European, Punjabi, Halal and Kosher meals, which are supplied by Appetito. Caribbean style and Gujarati vegetarian meals are freshly prepared by the West Indian Senior Citizens Project and the East West Community Project respectively through a block/spot contract arrangement. If change is supported, service users currently in receipt of mobile meals will receive individual reassessments of their needs to enable an appropriate alternative to be planned. Where needed, appropriate support will be given to set up alternative options chosen by the service user. The alternatives will be dependent on individual needs and will therefore vary but may include options such as direct payments, domiciliary (home) care, alternatives hot meal

provision or support to order meals which the service user can reheat themselves for example.

As well as service users, the change will impact on staff at City Transport and City Catering involved in the mobile meals preparation and delivery as well as the two external food suppliers currently under contract to prepare mobile meals.

Who will it affect and how will they likely be affected?

It will affect 236 existing service users as well as 19 staff, 16 from City Transport and 3 from City Catering (8.93 FTE). It will also affect two external support/meal providers.

Service users will be reassessed and where they have eligible needs will be supported to organise alternative provision. This will mean they continue to get their needs met but in many cases will get their meal from a different source. Those receiving meals from external providers may choose to continue to purchase their meals from there so there may be a lesser impact. Assessments are holistic and diet and health needs will be included in a support plan and will be taken into account when services are organised on behalf of a service user.

For staff at City Catering and City Transport redundancy is a possibility, however staff may be able to be redeployed within school kitchens or within Passenger and Transport services where vacancies exist.

A change from a block contracting arrangement to the use of personal budgets and a lower value contract (likely to be a framework) would cause some financial uncertainty for both providers as there is less security of knowing what income will be received.

Question 2:

Will the proposal have an impact on people because of their protected characteristic? Tick the anticipated impact for those likely to be affected by protected characteristic.

	No impact	Positive impact	Negative impact	Impact not known
Age		✓	✓	
Disability		✓	✓	
Gender reassignment				✓
Pregnancy and maternity				✓
Race		✓	✓	
Religion or belief				✓
Sex (gender)		✓	✓	
Sexual orientation				✓

Question 3:

For those likely to receive a positive impact, describe the likely positive impact for each group sharing a protected characteristic. How many people are likely to be affected?

Age, disability, race, religion and gender have been highlighted as areas likely to be impacted on through this project/proposal. The majority of people in receipt of meals are older people or disabled people and more women receive meals than men and these groups will therefore be disproportionately affected compared to other groups. Meals are delivered to people in all communities and their race, religion or belief may impact on their meal choice and current meal provider. People in some communities may be more affected than others therefore.

The positive impact is likely to be the same for each group affected, in that the change proposed would mean that people get reassessed and those eligible for services will receive support to choose a suitable alternative to mobile meals which they will then purchase with their personal budget (either directly through a Direct Payment or indirectly through a managed budget). This should result in people choosing options that meet their needs and suit their practical arrangements. With the current mobile meals provision many thousands of meals are wasted each year because meals can only be delivered at certain times so people are often out and miss them. If people can choose from a variety of places they should be able to arrange more flexible options that meet their needs both in terms of any cultural or dietary requirements but also in terms of preparation and delivery. In addition people currently receiving a home care call may have their meal support needs met by home care support and again – this can be more closely tailored to chosen meal times.

It is possible those currently receiving frozen regenerated European, Halal, Punjabi and Kosher meals may experience a particularly positive impact as these meals have come under some criticism in terms of quality and portion size.

Service users - profile

Race

Leicester City Council estimates (which are based on the census 2011 and local information) suggest that across the Council as a whole 51% of the population is white, 37% is Asian and 6% is Black. The data from current mobile meals service users shows us that 45% of users

are Asian, 45% white and 6% African Caribbean. This shows that Asian service users will be disproportionately affected by the proposed recommendations.

Gender

There is a significantly higher number (60%) of female recipients as compared to male (40%). The gender profile of Leicester city as a whole has a higher proportion of females compared to males running across all age groups. However within the 65+ age group across the city, the difference is 56% female and 44% male. Therefore females will be disproportionately affected by these recommendations.

Age

Perhaps unsurprisingly the largest group affected are older people (77% of the total customers in receipt of Mobile Meals are over the age of 70 years) and this may indicate that many of those affected will be looking for a managed personal budget in future.

Disability

Across Leicester 8.4% of the population are disabled people claiming invalidity benefits. Unsurprisingly, the percentage of people currently receiving the mobile meals service is much higher than that with 43% having a physical disability rising to 64% if physical/age related frailty or temporary illness is included.

Religion

We do not know the religion of all the current users. However meal choices are often dictated or influenced by people’s religion and we know the current meal provision is as follows:

	Number of Customers	Percentage Customers
European Style Meals	120	51%
Gujarati Style Meals	92	39%
Caribbean Style Meals	12	5%
Punjabi Style Meals	12	5%
	236	100%

Question 4:

For those likely to receive a negative impact, describe the likely negative impact for each group sharing a protected characteristic. How many people are likely to be affected?

Age, disability, race, religion and gender have been highlighted as areas likely to be impacted on through this project/proposal. The majority of people in receipt of meals are older people or disabled people and more women receive meals than men and these groups will therefore be disproportionately affected compared to other groups. Meals are delivered to people in all communities and their race, religion or belief may impact on their meal choice and current meal provider. People in some communities may be more affected than others therefore. The service user profile is as listed in Question 3.

For all groups affected the impact will be similar – that is they will cease to receive the mobile meals service they currently get but they will each have an individual needs assessment that will identify an appropriate personalised alternative. Therefore although receiving a different service, it will still meet their needs and those affected should not be impacted on adversely. However, it is recognised that many people do not like change and may experience a negative impact from experiencing change itself as much as from the change of meal/provider. It is possible some people may have regular drivers delivering

meals and may experience a negative impact as a result of the change.

As EWCP and WISCP already provide meals to customers through private arrangements it is possible that these users will continue to get their meals from the same source going forward (if they choose) but just under a different arrangement. It will not be an option for those receiving European, Halal, Punjabi and Kosher meals regenerated by City Catering and delivered by City Transport to continue to get this service as it will not be available to purchase on a private/individual basis going forward. It is therefore possible to suggest that those receiving European, Halal, Punjabi and Kosher meals may notice a bigger change therefore.

Impacts will vary depending on individual options chosen but one of the likely alternative options is or those who receive home care to have a meal prepared or reheated by a home care worker. In this case, for those who have meals delivered freshly currently – i.e. those who get Gujarati or African/Caribbean meals, a reheated replacement may provide a perceived lower quality option.

However, it must be noted all service users can take the opportunity to take a Direct Payment and therefore could continue to purchase the meal type they wish.

Providers can set their own pricing arrangements and although we would anticipate they price themselves competitively it is possible that because the meals have been subsidised to date, when service users get to choose their own options they may not want to pay the “going rate” that is being set by the current providers and will therefore not continue to receive meals from EWCP or WISCP.

How can these negative impacts be reduced or removed?

Service users will be supported on a 1-1 basis to choose appropriate options that meet their needs and as part of the project management service users will be communicated with to explain the changes and reassure them. People who are currently in receipt of a mobile meals service have differing needs for example with some unable to prepare a meal but other simply unable to obtain the shopping/food/meal. Any future services will be designed to meet the specific area of need and different options will be made available to ensure this can happen.

Question 5:

Is there other alternative or comparable provision available in the city? Who provides it and where is it provided?

Some external providers already undertake some of the functions of the mobile meals service – WISCP and EWCP provide to specific cultural groups. When looking at alternative meal options, soft market testing established that there are providers across the city who can deliver hot meals. Providers also exist who will deliver frozen meals but heating of these needs to be arranged separately. The Council wouldn't commission frozen meal provision but this may be an option people choose independently. Other home care providers exist who can support people to prepare or warm a meal and a mixture of these options will be the replacement service for some of the people affected. Soft market testing showed there were examples of all meals types being provided for however there is more choice for some groups than others and prices vary.

Can this alternative or comparable provision reduce or remove the negative impacts identified in Question 5? If not, why not?

As service users will receive a personal budget going forward there is no longer a remit for the Council to hold block contracts as people will make their own choices and purchases. Therefore getting another provider to deliver the mobile meals service en masse is not appropriate but the Council will need to ensure there are options available for people to purchase with their personal budget.

Would service users negatively affected by the proposal be eligible to use this alternative or comparable provision, and would it meet the service users' identified needs?

Although it is believed service users will not experience a significant negative impact, service users assessed as eligible for continued provision will be able to receive a service from wherever they choose including existing providers if they take a Direct Payment. The cost factor may be an issue in deciding where meals are purchased.

Question 6:

Will any particular area of the city be positively or negatively affected by the proposal, compared to other parts of the city? Describe where this is likely to take place, and why.

This impacts across the city however, we know from the profile of service users that in Latimer and Spinney Hills there are a larger proportion of mobile meals recipients than elsewhere. Within these 2 wards, approximately 39% of the mobile meal customers receive Gujarati style meals.

The user profile across the city is as follows:

	Number of Customers	Percentage of Customers
Abbey	10	4%
Aylestone	5	2%
Baumont Leys	6	3%
Belgrave	20	8%
Braunstone Park Rowley Fields	7	3%
Castle	7	3%
Charnwood	19	8%
Coleman	7	3%
Evington	8	3%
Eyres Monsell	5	2%
Fosse	6	3%
Freemen	2	1%
Humberstone & Hamilton	13	6%
Knighton	7	3%
Latimer	30	13%
New Parks	8	3%
Rushey Mead	17	7%
Spinney Hills	22	9%

Stoneygate	11	5%
Thurncourt	11	5%
Westcotes	8	3%
Western Park	7	3%
	236	100%

Question 7:

Is it likely that there may be additional negative impacts arising over the next three years that need to be considered? Describe any additional negative impacts over time that could realistically occur.

Some people using the mobile meals service may also be in receipt of other social care services such as day care which may change over the next 3 years. Although changes to service are in order to personalise provision and should not have a negative impact, for some people the cumulative effect of change can be important.

Question 8:

What data/information/analysis have you used to inform your equality impact findings?

Staff profiles for City Catering and City Transport, population data for the city and profile data for the current mobile meals users.

Date completed10th October 2013.....

Step 2: Consultation on the final proposal

Question1:

**What consultation on the final proposal has taken place?
When, where and who with?**

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 and a variety of methods were made available for customers and stakeholders to feed back including information in alternative formats.

There was a 63% return rate (177 questionnaires received).

Question 2:

What potential impacts did consultation stakeholders identify?

- Concern that customers will lose human contact, which could lead to isolation and risk to welfare
- Will direct payments be sufficient to meet people's needs?

- Effects of budget cuts on old and vulnerable
- Still a need for culturally appropriate meals
- Concerns that any new arrangements may not provide the nutrition needed
- Opportunities for more choice and control

What positive impacts were identified? For people with which protected characteristics?

Some customers felt they would have more choice and control over what to eat and when. This relates to age, disability and religion/beliefs.

What negative impacts were identified? For people with which protected characteristics?

Stakeholders told us the following:

- Concern that customers will lose human contact, which could lead to isolation and risk to welfare
- Will direct payments be sufficient to meet people's needs?
- Effects of budget cuts on old and vulnerable
- Still a need for culturally appropriate meals
- Concerns that any new arrangements may not provide the nutrition needed

This relates to age, disability and religion/beliefs.

Question 3:

Did stakeholders indicate how positive impacts could be further promoted? How?

No

Did stakeholders indicate how negative impacts could be reduced or removed? How?

- By keeping the service as it is
- By making sure that a hot meal delivery is still available
- By ensuring the quality and nutritional benefits of any new arrangements
- By providing advice and information about alternative options

Date completed15/10/13.....

Step 3: The recommendation (the recommended decision on how to change the service)

Question 1:

What changes are being recommended?

To cease the service as per section 1.

Who will be affected by these changes?

Service users, staff and providers.

Question 2:

What is the anticipated impact of these changes on people who share the following protected characteristics? Tick the anticipated impact below:

	No impact	Positive impact	Negative impact	Impact not known
Age		✓	✓	
Disability		✓	✓	
Gender reassignment				✓
Pregnancy and maternity				✓
Race		✓	✓	
Religion or belief				✓
Sex (gender)		✓	✓	
Sexual orientation				✓

Question 3:

For those likely to receive a positive impact, describe the likely positive impact for each group sharing a protected characteristic. How many people are likely to be affected?

Age, disability, race, religion and gender have been highlighted as areas likely to be impacted on through this project/proposal. The majority of people in receipt of meals are older people or disabled people and more women receive meals than men and these groups will therefore be disproportionately affected compared to other groups. Meals are delivered to people in all communities and their race, religion or belief may impact on their meal choice and current meal provider. People in some communities may be more affected than others therefore.

The positive impact is likely to be the same for each group affected, in that the change proposed would mean that people get reassessed and those eligible for services will receive support to choose a suitable alternative to mobile meals which they will then purchase with their personal budget (either directly through a Direct Payment or indirectly through a managed budget). This should result in people choosing options that meet their needs and suit their practical arrangements. With the current mobile meals provision many thousands of meals are wasted each year because meals can only be delivered at certain times so people are often out and miss them. If people can choose from a variety of places they should be able to arrange more flexible options that meet their needs both in terms of any cultural or dietary requirements but also in terms of preparation and delivery.

In addition people currently receiving a home care call may have their meal support needs met by home care support and again – this can be more closely tailored to chosen meal times, offering potential for evening calls as well as lunchtime.

It is possible those currently receiving frozen regenerated European, Halal, Punjabi and Kosher meals may experience a particularly positive impact as these meals have come under some criticism in terms of quality and portion size and service users can choose

options which better suit them.

Question 4:

For those likely to receive a negative impact, describe the likely negative impact for each group sharing a protected characteristic. How many people are likely to be affected?

Age, disability, race, religion and gender have been highlighted as areas likely to be impacted on through this project/proposal. The majority of people in receipt of meals are older people or disabled people and more women receive meals than men and these groups will therefore be disproportionately affected compared to other groups. Meals are delivered to people in all communities and their race, religion or belief may impact on their meal choice and current meal provider. People in some communities may be more affected than others therefore. The service user profile is as listed in Section 1 Question 3.

For all groups affected the impact will be similar – that is they will cease to receive the mobile meals service they currently get but they will each have an individual needs assessment that will identify an appropriate personalised alternative. Therefore although receiving a different service, it will still meet their needs and those affected should not be impacted on adversely. However, it is recognised that many people do not like change and may experience a negative impact from experiencing change itself as much as from the change of meal/provider. It is possible some people may have regular drivers delivering meals and may experience a negative impact as a result of the change.

As EWCP and WISCP already provide meals to customers through private arrangements it is possible that these users will continue to get their meals from the same source going forward (if they choose) but just under a different arrangement. It will not be an option for those receiving European, Halal, Punjabi and Kosher meals regenerated by City Catering and delivered by City Transport to continue to get this service as it will not be available to purchase on a private/individual basis going forward. It is therefore possible to suggest that those receiving European, Halal, Punjabi and Kosher meals may notice a bigger change therefore.

Impacts will vary depending on individual options chosen but one of the likely alternative options is or those who receive home care to have a meal prepared or reheated by a home care worker. In this case, for those who have meals delivered freshly currently – i.e. those who get Gujarati or African/Caribbean meals, a reheated replacement may provide a perceived lower quality option. There are 92 people currently receiving Gujarati meals and 12 receiving African/Caribbean meals.

However, it must be noted all service users can take the opportunity to take a Direct Payment and therefore could continue to purchase the meal type they wish.

Providers can set their own pricing arrangements and although we would anticipate they price themselves competitively it is possible that because the meals have been subsidised to date, when service users get to choose their own options they may not want to pay the “going rate” that is being set by the current providers and will therefore not continue to receive meals from EWCP or WISCP.

Soft market testing has been done with other providers in the market (as well as the current providers). There are indications that some customers will pay more under the new arrangements, particularly where they choose a like for like replacement – i.e. a hot meal

delivery. This is because the Council currently subsidises the meals, when actually the food costs should sit with service users. It has been indicated through soft market testing that prices of African/Caribbean meals and Kosher meals may be dearer than other options when people purchase directly. There are 12 people in receipt of an African/Caribbean meal and none currently in receipt of Kosher meals.

Stakeholders raised the following specific points:

- Concern that customers will lose human contact, which could lead to isolation and risk to welfare
- Will direct payments be sufficient to meet people's needs?
- Effects of budget cuts on old and vulnerable
- Still a need for culturally appropriate meals
- Concerns that any new arrangements may not provide the nutrition needed

How can these negative impacts be reduced or removed?

The following points consider the impacts stakeholders raised and how they can be addressed:

- Service users have a holistic assessment of their needs and meal provision is only one part of that. Service users who need social support will have this taken into account as part of their support planning and appropriate support put in place. This could be an alternative daily hot meal delivery if they require minimal contact or something such as befriending or community activities if more support is required.
- Soft market testing suggests that meals can be purchased for between £1.48 and £5.95 for frozen meals and £3.60 and £7.71 for a hot meal delivery. Service users currently pay £3.05 and if this contribution is added to the £2.28 Direct Payment amount towards meal delivery service users will have £5.33 per meal to spend. It should be noted that in practice, customers have their total needs met within the envelope of their Resource Allocation System (RAS) amount, rather than getting specific payments for specific things.
- The Council has a duty to ensure people with an assessed need have that need met and therefore anyone who is old and vulnerable as per the stakeholder comment would still have their need met.
- As above, the Council has a duty to ensure people's needs – including cultural and dietary are met. Soft market testing suggests there are appropriate options available.
- Diet and nutrition form part of the assessment process. However, service users with capacity are responsible for their own meal choices and staff would only advise. Those without capacity will be supported to do this. In other circumstances, where for example a home care worker is reheating or preparing a meal, the nutritional value of the food will not have been checked in the same way as with a commissioned meal. In the contract specification for domiciliary care it does state the essential support skills for staff should include "promotion of healthy lifestyles including eating choices, meal preparation and activity". If capacity was not there, workers would be able to choose a hot meal delivery from a contract framework (if this option is chosen) where nutritionally balanced meals are available or via a direct payment from a reputable source such as Wiltshire Farm foods.

Service users will be supported on a 1-1 basis to choose appropriate options that meet their needs and as part of the project management service users will be communicated with to

explain the changes and reassure them.

A project team is in place and will oversee the process and will take into account the needs of all parties.

Question 5:

Are there any actions required as a result of this EIA?

If yes complete the EIA Action Plan on the next page. List up to 3 priority actions.

Date completed23/10/13.....

This EIA has been completed by:

Lead officer (signature)	Mercy Lett-Charnock
Date	23/10/13

The EIA has been signed off by the Equality Officer:

Equality officer (signature)	Irene Kszyk
Date	25/10/13

Impact Analysis – Option 4

Mobile Meal recipients have been placed into 6 groups in order to make assumptions about the future services they may receive. This then enables consideration of possible changes to the charges that customers may have to pay.

	Assumption About Replacement Services	Customer Numbers	Number of Meals	Will Not Pay More	Will Pay More
1	Customers already in receipt of a mealtime home care visit	73	441	63	10
2	Customers in receipt of a DP for any other services	20	106	20	0
3	Customers who live alone and receive no other services	58	319	54	4
4	Customers who live alone and receive other services	39	230	38	1
5	Customers who do not live alone and receive no other services	23	136	22	1
6	Customers who do not live alone and receive other services	23	116	23	0
		236	1348	220	16
				93%	7%

How Many Customers Will Pay More Than Currently?

It is estimated that out of the 236 current mobile meals recipients 220 (93%) will pay no more than they do currently; 16 people (7%) are expected to pay more. This is based on applying assumptions about the future services that people will receive, along with information from financial assessments for the 70% who have had them.

How Much More Will People Pay?

Using information about the expected services that people will receive, and the outcomes of financial assessments already undertaken, it has been possible to estimate the future contribution amounts as follows:

People who will pay no more	220	93%
Pay less than £2.50 per week extra	1	0%
Pay between £2.50 and £5 per week extra	6	3%
Pay between £5 and £7.50 per week extra	0	0%
Pay between £7.50 and £10 per week extra	2	1%
Pay between £10 and £12.50 per week	2	1%
Pay between £12.50 and £15 per week	5	2%
	236	

Financial Impact for the Council

Under this scenario the total cost of replacement services would be in the region of £156k. This takes into account the additional income from chargeable replacement services. The forecast net cost of the Mobile Meals service as at the end of August 2013 was £369k. There would therefore be annual savings in the region of £213k.

Impact Analysis – Option 5

Under this option, the cost implications for customers are expected to be the same as for Option 4. If a person receives a managed Direct Payment rather than a contracted service, then the charge to the customer would be identical. The cost to the Council would be slightly higher under Option 5 as a result of the additional cost of the third party DP support service.

How Many Customers Will Pay More Than Currently?

It is estimated that out of the 236 current mobile meals recipients 220 (93%) will pay no more than they do currently; 16 people (7%) are expected to pay more. This is based on applying assumptions about the future services that people will receive, along with information from financial assessments for the 70% who have had them.

How Much More Will People Pay?

Using information about the expected services that people will receive, and the outcomes of financial assessments already undertaken, it has been possible to estimate the future contribution amounts as follows:

People who will pay no more	220	93%
Pay less than £2.50 per week extra	1	0%
Pay between £2.50 and £5 per week extra	6	3%
Pay between £5 and £7.50 per week extra	0	0%
Pay between £7.50 and £10 per week extra	2	1%
Pay between £10 and £12.50 per week	2	1%
Pay between £12.50 and £15 per week	5	2%
	236	

Financial Impact for the Council

Under this scenario the total cost of replacement services would be in the region of £163k. This takes into account the additional income from chargeable replacement services. The forecast net cost of the Mobile Meals service as at the end of August 2013 was £369k. There would therefore be annual savings in the region of £206k.

Equality Impact

It is not possible to identify the individual people who will pay more in any scenario, since this will depend on the replacement service that each person will receive in the future (which, in turn, is dependent on their individual needs) and their financial circumstances.

However, as an indicator we can look at the 47 people whose financial assessment indicates that they could pay more. Care must be taken given the small number of people; numbers are shown alongside the percentages for perspective.

Gender

Proportion of each gender that have had a financial assessment and can afford to pay more:

Female	23%	(23 out of 101)
Male	38%	(24 out of 64)

Ethnicity

Proportion of each ethnicity that have had a financial assessment and can afford to pay more:

Asian or Asian British – Indian	24%	(18 out of 76)
Asian or Asian British - other Asian origin	67%	(2 out of 3)
Black Caribbean & White	100%	(1 out of 1)
Black or Black British – Caribbean	10%	(1 out of 10)
White British	35%	(24 out of 68)
White Irish	0%	(0 out of 1)
White –other	0%	(0 out of 5)
Other	100%	(1 out of 1)

Primary Client Type

Proportion of each Primary Client Type that have had a financial assessment and can afford to pay more:

Mental Health	27%	(13 out of 48)
Learning Disabilities	33%	(1 out of 3)
Physical Disabilities	28%	(31 out of 111)
Substance Misuse	50%	(1 out of 2)
Other Vulnerable People	100%	(1 out of 1)

Age

Proportion of each age group that have had a financial assessment and can afford to pay more:

18 to 64	41%	(12 out of 29)
65 to 74	20%	(5 out of 25)
75 to 84	25%	(12 out of 48)
85 to 94	28%	(16 out of 57)
95+	33%	(2 out of 6)

Appendix 8

SCENARIOS – examples of how the options could affect customers

There are a wide range of potential permutations within the options. These depend on the particular customer, their needs and their funding thresholds. The scenarios below are indicators of how some of these people may be affected depending on what choices they may make.

The scenarios are based on indicative figures. In practice, customers have their total needs met within the envelope of their Resource Allocation System (RAS) amount, rather than getting specific payments for specific things.

Customer A - Already receives a direct payment and still needs a hot meal delivered	
What she currently gets	What could happen with new arrangements
Customer A currently receives a direct payment and arranges her own care. She also receives mobile meals 7 days a week. She wants to carry on having a hot meal delivered daily.	As Customer A already has a direct payment, she starts to receive an additional £15.96 per week. This is to cover the delivery part of her hot meals. She can then choose where to buy her meals from and how much she wants to spend. As she is used to paying £3.05 a day for mobile meals, this means that she now has a total of £37.31 a week to spend on having a hot meal delivered. That is £5.33 per meal. If she chooses meals that cost up to this amount, she will not be worse off. She may choose to pay more if she wishes. The average cost for a standard British/European meal, from the information we have, is £4.88.

Customer B - Has a managed direct payment and still needs a hot meal delivered	
What he currently gets	What could happen with new arrangements
Customer B has a direct payment, but it is managed for him so that he doesn't have to worry about making arrangements himself. He receives mobile meals 7 days a week. He wants to carry on having a hot meal delivery.	Customer B's direct payment is increased by £15.96 a week and this is managed for him along with the rest of his direct payment. He would receive initial support/advice to set up a new meal delivery and an independent organisation would manage the payments on his behalf. As he is used to paying £3.05 a day for mobile meals, this means that he now has a total of £37.31 a week to spend on having a hot meal delivered. That is £5.33 per meal. If he chooses meals that cost up to this amount, he will not be worse off. He may choose to pay more if he wishes. The average cost for a standard British/European meal, from the information we have, is £4.88. The difference between this customer and customer A is that a direct payment support service would help him manage the financial parts of the process.

Customer C – Can heat meals up but can't order for herself – she wants to order from a national frozen meal provider

What she currently gets	What could happen with new arrangements
Customer C receives mobile meals 7 days a week. However, she would prefer to have meals delivered that can be heated at a time that suits her. She can heat them, but she can't order them for herself. She does not receive home care and her financial circumstances mean that she would not have to pay for it.	Customer C starts to get half an hour home care each fortnight to help her with ordering her food. She chooses a dedicated meal delivery company, as when they are delivered, they would be put in the freezer for her. (If she orders from a supermarket this may not happen.) The financial impact on Customer C depends on where she chooses to buy her meals from. She previously spent £3.05 a day on her mobile meal. The extent to which she is better or worse off depends on his choice of provider. A frozen meal and dessert can typically be purchased for £3.50, but there is a wide variety to choose from. Based on £3.50 per meal, it would cost her £3.15 a week more.

Customer D - Already has a home care visit at lunch time and doesn't have to pay for care	
What he currently gets	What could happen with new arrangements
Customer D has a home care visit at lunch time for half an hour. He also has a mobile meal 7 days a week. He doesn't have to pay towards his home care.	Customer D could have his home care visit extended by 15 minutes a day so that the carer can heat a frozen meal up for him. The costs of the food would be the same as for Customer C (above). As Customer D does not have to pay for his home care, the extent to which he is better or worse off depends on his choice of provider. Typically he could be an average of £3.15 a week worse off.

Customer E - Already has a home care visit at lunch time and has to pay for care	
What she currently gets	What could happen with new arrangements
Customer E has a home care visit at lunch time for half an hour. She also has a mobile meal 7 days a week. She has to pay for her home care.	Customer E could have her home care visit extended by 15 minutes a day so that the carer can heat a frozen meal up for her. The costs of the food would be the same as for Customer C (above). As she has to pay for her home care, then she would have to pay an additional £21.77 per week for the extra home care. She could also have to pay an average of £3.15 a week extra towards food due to the cost of the food, but this depends on what choice of provider she makes. This means that she could be £24.92 a week worse off and would be unlikely to take this option.

Customer F – Does not have home care or a direct payment, and needs a Caribbean meal	
What he currently gets	What could happen with new arrangements
Customer F currently receives a Caribbean mobile meal 7 days a week. He needs to	Customer F starts to receive a direct payment for the delivery element of his meal. This is £15.96 a

continue receiving a hot meal daily and wants a direct payment.	week. He finds a provider of Caribbean meals and the cost of each meal is an average of £6.20. Taking off the £15.96 for delivery and the £21.35 (£3.05 daily) for his food that he is used to paying, he would be an average of £6.09 a week worse off. However, it should be noted that the majority of Caribbean meals are between £5.95 and £7.71, which would mean that he may either need to decide to pay more or choose a different meal option.
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Customer G- Needs a diabetic, low salt, Gujarati meal

What he currently gets	What could happen with new arrangements
Customer G currently gets a mobile meal 7 days a week. He does not receive home care. He has special dietary needs due to his health. He likes Gujarati meals.	Customer G could take a direct payment of £15.96 for delivery and arrange for meals to be delivered from a specialist provider of Gujarati meals. The cost of these meals, including delivery, is £5.25 (£36.75 a week.) Including the direct payment and the daily £3.05 he is used to paying, he has £37.31 available a week. This means that his meals will cost him 56p a week less.

Customer H - Still wants a hot meal delivered, arranged by the Council

What she currently gets	What could happen with new arrangements
Customer H currently gets a mobile meal 7 days a week. She does not have home care at the moment and a direct payment is not suitable for her.	The Council could contract with a provider to continue to deliver meals to Customer H. She would continue to pay the £3.05 per meal and there would be no additional costs to her. The only difference for Customer H is that someone else will be delivering her meals.