

Subject:	Community Meals		
Date of Meeting:	Monday 25th November 2013		
Report of:	Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Debbie Greening	Tel: 295739
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The community meals service was retendered in March 2013 and the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) were successful in retaining the contract.
- 1.2 A new model for meal provision and for the role of volunteers was outlined within the tender document and RVS ran a pilot to test the new arrangements during August 2013.
- 1.3 This report gives details of the outcome of the pilot and describes the future plans for introducing the new model across the city.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the content of the report is noted and the actions recommended below are agreed

Recommendation 1

The Adult Care and Health Committee agree that the new model for community meals should be introduced in a phased way across the city.

Recommendation 2

The Adult Care and Health Committee agree that the new model of volunteer support suggested by the RVS should also be adopted and introduced across the city.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Chronology of events

- June 2011 – Adults Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee – agree to include community meals on its work programme
- Sept 2011 - Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee – received a report to inform the Scrutiny process
- Nov 2011 - Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny workshop to look at options and principles for commissioning the service
- March 2012 - Adult Social Care and Health Cabinet meeting - agreed principles to guide future commissioning for community meals
- June 2012- Adult Care and Health Committee agree recommendations to
 - § Extend contractual arrangements from Sept 2012 to March 2013

- § Tender for a community meals service to operate from April 2013 for 3 years with an option to extend to a 4th year.
 - § Raise the charge for community meals by 20p every six months until the point that no subsidy is required by the Council.
- March 2013- Service procured following competitive tender process with RVS as the successful bidder.
- August 2013- First pilot in the country run by RVS in Brighton to test new community meals model, resulting in excellent feedback from all stakeholders

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 The service specification developed for the new community meals service included the key principles agreed in March 2012 (see chronology above), to
- promote personalisation and individual choice and control
 - promote locally sourced food in the delivery of this service
 - ensure that the Council can meet its statutory duties for those with eligible care needs through the new arrangements
 - encourage an innovative, creative approach to meals provision and encourage partnership working.
 - ensure signposting and information is available so that anyone interested in accessing such a service is better able to do so. This will include information regarding the nutritional value of the meals.
 - ensure that transitional arrangements are considered so that current service users continue to receive a service.
- Additional requirements were also included to reduce isolation and increase social capital .
- 3.2.2 A procurement exercise was undertaken in early 2013 to ensure that sufficient suitably qualified providers were invited to tender. The RVS bid was successful on the strength of their proposal to run a pilot to test their new model.
- 3.2.3 The requirements of the service specification are for the provision of a fully-managed community meals service, which by providing a wholesome and nutritious meal to Customers, helps to promote the health, wellbeing and independence of people living at home who are at risk of nutritional disadvantage. The service is in principle required 365 days per year, although individual Customers will not necessarily require a service every day. The service will include a safe and well check and reducing social isolation has been identified as a key element of the new specification together with improving levels of sustainability. The tender evaluation report is attached as appendix 1.
- 3.2.4 RVS proposed the introduction of a cook- chill model using an innovative method known as Steamplicity. Instead of regenerating frozen meals Steamplicity uses microwave technology to cook fresh or partially cooked chilled meals.
- 3.2.5 None of the bidders were able to identify a suitable local supplier for the hot meals service. Steamplicity meals are produced in St Albans, Hertfordshire, and will be delivered to the Royal Voluntary Service premises on an every other day basis. Food miles will be reduced by using Steamplicity instead of the current supplier, TVF (based in Wales), resulting in lower carbon emissions. Also the RVS hope to use Nibbles Catering in Laughton, East Sussex for sandwiches, yoghurts, salads and other ambient meals to further reduce food miles.

3.3 RVS Steamplicity pilot

- 3.3.1 A pilot was undertaken in Brighton during August to test the new model and to consult with service users and stakeholders regarding the Steamplicity model. The pilot project plan is attached as Appendix 2
- 3.3.2 The Steamplicity model provides a number of advantages including:
- Offering fresh meals which look and taste appetising;
 - More choice,(24 meals and 15 desserts available daily compared with the current offer of 4 meal choices and 2/3 desserts) access and control for service users. Meals are chosen and ordered nearer the time of delivery (usually the day before)and chilled meals can be delivered outside the usual delivery window and heated at a time convenient to the service user,providing more flexibility There is also more variety including lunch, tea and breakfast packs.
 - A more person centred approach depending upon the needs of the individual- those who need a hot meal delivered can have the meal heated in the van and served to them on a plate, others can have support to heat the meal themselves using their own microwave oven leading to more independence where appropriate;
 - More focus on reducing social isolation both through the new model of meal delivery allowing for more time with the service user and also by introducing Customer Support Volunteers who will work with individuals and partner organisations in the city to support access to community activities such as lunch clubs, social clubs, advice networks etc.
- 3.3.3 The RVS completed an evaluation following the pilot, 38 clients were involved, of these 24 (63%) responded to the feedback questionnaire. The results of the consultation gave a very positive indication for customers' appetite to move to a new service model.
- 3.3.4 Key messages from the pilot evaluation are:
- § 96% of respondents rated the new service between good and excellent
 - § 92% reported that the meals were always or mostly tasty
 - § 92% were happy with the choice of meals to meet their needs
 - § 96% found the new ordering process easy to understand
 - § the majority of customers wanted to continue to have a hot lunch delivered, but a number wanted chilled meals to heat up themselves
- 3.3.5 Further volunteer recruitment will take place for specialist volunteering roles, to include volunteer trainers, Customer Support Workers and volunteer befrienders. All new volunteers receive a comprehensive induction to the service, training and DBS checks. The training includes health and safety, food hygiene, equality and diversity and safeguarding training.
- ### **3.4 Implementation Plans**
- 3.4.1 An implementation plan has been developed by the RVS to introduce the new model in a phased way across the city. Any existing service users who do not wish to have the new meals will be offered the option of continuing with frozen meals. All new service users will be offered the new Steamplicity model.
- 3.4.2 Work with assessment teams will continue to ensure that community meals are promoted and offered to as many eligible people as possible.
- 3.4.3 The cost of the community meal service also includes a different volunteer model which retains the safe and well check but also focuses on reducing isolation and improving independence. A consultation process with RVS staff and volunteers will be undertaken by the RVS prior to implementation of the new model.

- 3.4.4 Committee previously agreed (June 25th 2012) that the charge for community meals will rise by 20p every 6 months until the point of no subsidy being required is reached. The current charge to service users is £3.70 as at Oct 2013
- 3.4.5 The unit cost of a community meal is currently £5.05, the proposed cost for the new Steamplicity meal is £6.33, this reflects the superior quality of the product
- 3.4.6 Costs associated with the implementation of the new model such as development of a new delivery van and introduction of further chilled cabinets at the base in Portslade were met by RVS for the pilot.

3.5 Efficiencies

- 3.5.1 By offering the improved community meal service to more vulnerable people it is possible that savings could be made from the community care budget by reducing the need for home care visits to provide meals.
- 3.5.3 By increasing the number of meals provided the unit cost to the Council will reduce further.
- 3.5.4 There are likely to be further efficiencies over time as the RVS have recently been successful in attaining the community meals contract with West Sussex County Council to deliver the Steamplicity model. The commissioner is in discussions with WSCC and RVS to ascertain where economies of scale could lead to further efficiencies.
- 3.5.5 The new model provides added value by utilising the RVS volunteers in a different way to work with individual service users both to increase levels of independence where possible and to reduce social isolation by linking in with other organisations across the city.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Full details of the consultation are included in the Pilot Report Appendix 3
- 4.2 RVS also held two tasting events prior to the pilot for other stakeholders including assessment teams, health colleagues, managers and Council Members. The feedback received from these events was also very positive regarding the quality of the meals and the proposed volunteer model.
- 4.3 Further customer engagement would be undertaken by the RVS prior to roll out of the new model.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The net unit cost of a community meal to the Council is currently £1.35. If the new model is adopted, this would increase to £2.63, reflecting the increased quality of the meals being offered. Based on the current 2013-14 projected meal numbers (80,000) the overall annual net costs would increase by approximately £0.070m, after accounting for two further 20p charge increases in April and October 2014.
- 5.2 It is anticipated that the increased costs will be offset by savings against the Community Care budget and this would need to be factored into the budget setting process for 2014-15. Further efficiencies are expected in the future as set out in the main body of the report.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Michael Bentley Date: 23/10/13

Legal Implications:

- 5.3 Whilst the Local Authority does not have a duty to provide Community Meals it chooses to exercise its statutory power to do so. In exercising this power and delivering this service the Local Authority must have regard to the national and local personalisation agenda, individual's Human Rights as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998 and its duty to the public purse. Under the section 47 of the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 the Local Authority has a duty to undertake an assessment of the care needs of an individual where it appears to that authority the individual may be in need of services; recipients of community meals may trigger this duty and it is therefore important the referral pathway ensures the Local Authority is able to identify such individuals. Within the pilot for the new model consultation was undertaken with affected individuals and stakeholders and further consultation is planned to inform the new model.

Lawyer Consulted: Sandra O'Brien Date: 05/11/13

Equalities Implications:

- 5.4 The community meals service offers a comprehensive choice to ensure that there is a range of options to meet the diverse needs of the community including culturally appropriate meals. An EIA will be completed before the roll out of the new model to ensure that all equality issues are identified and that the service is accessible to all who need it.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.5 The Community meals service complies with the Council's sustainable food standards. The new model uses fresh rather than frozen food which further reduces the carbon foot print. The meals are packaged in recyclable units themselves made from 50% recycled material.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.6 There are no specific implications for crime and disorder

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.7 This is a new model of delivery for the RVS. The pilot was the first in the country and RVS identified a number of risks in the pilot project plan.(appendix 2) The pilot delivered learning that has led to modifications both to equipment, the vehicle and the delivery model.
- 5.8 The model is now being rolled out in West Sussex which will provide additional learning and opportunities to refine the model further before rolling out across Brighton and Hove.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.9 The Community Meals service provides nutritionally balanced meal which meets industry standards. Access to community meals is an important element in the health and well being of people.

A key principle of the new service model is improved well being by promoting accessibility to the local community and reducing isolation.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.10 The new model supports each of the Council's priorities.
- § Tackling inequalities through provision of nutritious food, safe and well checks and reducing social isolation. This supports the health and wellbeing of some of the most vulnerable residents.
 - § Engaging people through an improved volunteering model that encourages links with other organisations working in the city.
 - § Creating a more sustainable city by reducing food miles, introducing a different delivery model for community meals and ensuring any waste is recyclable.
 - § Modernising the Council through sustainable procurement, recognition of the social value offered through the RVS model and improving value for money through additional benefits from the revised volunteer service.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 The standard model for community meals (reheating frozen meals) is adequate and has been in place for many years. The meals offered meet the quality standards for the industry but take up has been in decline over recent years. This model offers limited opportunities for reducing isolation and does not encourage reablement.
- 6.2 RVS consultation with stakeholders and service users have found that there is little difference in quality between the suppliers of frozen meals.
- 6.3 The model offers a limited choice of 4 main meals and 2-3 dessert options delivered within a designated time slot

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Steamplicity model offers chilled meals that look more appetising.
- 7.2 This model offers more service user choice, with 24 main meals and 15 dessert options, the meals can be chosen and ordered much nearer the time of delivery and delivery times can be arranged to suit the service user.
- 7.3 This model delivers added value by allowing volunteer resources to be used in a different way to reduce social isolation, to encourage independence and to identify opportunities to access the wider community where ever possible.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Tender evaluation report
2. Draft mobilisation plan
3. Pilot report

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

2.

Background Documents

1. None

