

<b>29 July 2014</b>		<b>ITEM: 7</b>
<b>Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>Meals on Wheels Public Consultation Results</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Sarah Turner – Older People and Dementia Commissioner		
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> N/A		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Roger Harris – Director of Health, Adults and Commissioning		
<b>This report is Public</b>		

## **Executive Summary**

The Council currently holds a contract with RVS (until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015) to provide hot meals to people who have been assessed as critical or substantial under the Adult Social Care FACS (Fair Access to Care) criteria<sup>1</sup>. The meals on wheels service is in place to ensure that people who are unable to prepare their main meal (including reheating frozen food) have the facility to receive one hot and nutritionally balanced meal each day. In addition to the meal, RVS also carry out welfare checks and medication prompts (where it has been assessed as a need).

On the 12 November 2013, Overview and Scrutiny agreed for a public consultation to take place regarding future delivery options of a meals on wheels service. This report details the response received from the public consultation.

### **1. Recommendation(s)**

- 1.1 Despite the consultation result, it is the Officers recommendation that HOSC's preferred option (combination of option of 3 and 6) is presented to Cabinet for decision. HOSC are asked to support this recommendation as this option will continue to meet the needs of the**

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<sup>1</sup> Full Title of document: Prioritising need in the context of Putting People First: a whole system approach to eligibility for social care – guidance on eligibility criteria for adult social care: England 2010

**most vulnerable service users who require a meal whilst delivering savings in this difficult financial climate.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 On 12 November 2013 a report was submitted to HOSC seeking approval to go out to public consultation regarding the future options for the delivery of meals on wheels in Thurrock. Six different options were identified.
- 2.2 HOSC identified a seventh option (a combination of options 3 and 6) as their preferred option.
- 2.3 A full public consultation (in partnership with Thurrock Coalition – our user led organisation) started on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2014 for twelve weeks (until 11 April 2014).
- 2.4 All current service users were written to and questionnaires including prepaid return envelopes included in the mailing (copy of letter and questionnaire are in Appendix 1).
- 2.5 People also had the facility to complete a questionnaire on line.
- 2.6 In addition, Thurrock Coalition ran a public consultation event (drop-in session) at the Beehive Centre, West Street, Grays on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2014.
- 2.7 Thurrock Coalition and Council Officers also attended a number of boards/groups to raise the profile of the consultation e.g. Thurrock Disability Network, Disability Partnership Board, Older People's Parliament, Thurrock Over Fifties Forum
- 2.8 A table detailing the number of response from each consultation method is attached as Appendix 2

## **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 70% of all respondents preferred Option 1 – Continue with current service delivery model (although the service would have to be tendered during 2014). The second most popular option with 10% of the 'votes' was O&S preferred option (to let the current contract end; to provide a subsidy in the form of a Direct Payment to eligible service users and provide support and advice to arrange a meal service).

	% of Votes
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Preferred Option (Combination of 3 and 6):</b> To let the current contract end. To provide a subsidy (in the form of a Direct Payment) to eligible service users so they can have a choice of provider. Provide support and advice to clients to arrange a meal service.	10
<b>Option 1:</b> Thurrock Council should continue with current service delivery model (although this will be retendered during 2014).	70
<b>Option 2:</b> Continue with current service delivery model but implement full cost recovery	3
<b>Option 3:</b> Stop providing a meal service and provide support and signposting information	3
<b>Option 4:</b> Provide only a frozen meal service.	3
<b>Option 5:</b> Provide a frozen meal service plus 15 minute call from a home carer to reheat the meal.	6
<b>Option 6:</b> Stop providing a meal service and provide a subsidy (in the form of a direct payment) to the services user.	1
<b>None of the Above or a Combination of the options:</b> If it is none of the above or is a combination of options, please detail your preference in the comments box below	3

3.2 The table below shows the percentage of 'votes' for each option

3.3 A number of additional comments were received as part of this consultation, a cross section of which are included in Appendix 3.

#### 4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Although in opposition to public consultation results the recommendation is to proceed with Overview and Scrutiny's preferred option due to the financial constraints the Council is currently operating within. Overview and Scrutiny's preferred option should secure efficiencies of approximately £50k in 2015/16 with an ongoing saving of approximately £100k thereafter. A tendered service would be unlikely to reach this level of savings.

It is the Officers view that this option will continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable service users who require a meal whilst delivering savings.

#### 5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Please see section 2.

## **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 RVS (current provider of meals on wheels) is a local employer. This decision is likely to result in redundancies in the community.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Michael Jones**  
**Management Accountant**

The financial implications depends on the option chosen.

Overview and Scrutiny's preferred option should secure significant efficiencies. A tendered service (e.g. option 1 – the consultations preferred option) would be unlikely to reach this level of savings.

Overview and Scrutiny's preferred option should secure efficiencies of approximately £50k in 2015/16 with an ongoing saving of approximately £100k thereafter. A tendered service would be unlikely to reach this level of savings.

Members will be aware that the Council faces unprecedented financial pressures over the medium term and that significant savings will need to be achieved and some difficult decisions will be required. However, these have to also be balanced against the Council's statutory responsibilities and the Council's priorities

### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Dawn Pelle**  
**Adult Care Lawyer**

Pursuant to Section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1972 the Council has responsibility to make arrangements for the provision of meals to eligible people.

If there is a change to how services are provided, service users must be reassessed to ensure that the change in delivery can still meet need.

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Teresa Evans**  
**Equalities and Cohesion Officer**

The two main areas of implication are age and gender as the average age of recipient is 84 and a high percentage of users are female. All recipients have either a physical disability, sensory impairment and/or cognitive impairment.

This is a change in the delivery mechanism and not a cut in service. The cost remains the same to service users. However, any future delivery option must meet the needs of current and future users and support will be given to ensure a smooth transition to the new delivery option

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

N/A

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- N/A

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Copy of consultation documentation
- Appendix 2 – Table of number and source of consultation responses
- Appendix 3 – Edited list of comments received during consultation period

**Report Author:**

Sarah Turner  
Older People and Dementia Commissioner  
Adult Social Care