



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

**23<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY 2023**

#### **SERVICE REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS**

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Transformation

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Cabinet on the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of the proposals for the future of the Council's Community Meals Service.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the attached Consultation Report (Appendix 1), which includes feedback received from the online survey, emails and telephone calls, the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 (Appendix 2) and the frequently asked questions posted out to service users (Appendix 3).
- 2.2 Consider and agree the preferred service change option moving forward, in respect of the Community Meals Service:

**Option 1:** to continue the service as it currently operates with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal.

**Option 2:** to reorganise the existing internal service with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal.

**Option 3:** to reorganise the existing internal service and provide a hot/frozen Community Meal Home Delivery Service with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal.

**Option 4:** to cease the current service and support service users to find alternative options.

- 2.3 Delegates authority to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, in consultation with the Director of Human Resources, to undertake and conclude necessary actions to implement the preferred option.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Council is facing significant financial challenges into the medium term and is considering the remodelling of key service areas to contribute to addressing the shortfall in funding.
- 3.2 To continue to provide a revised Community Meals Service to ensure the availability of a hot meal to support our vulnerable residents in RCT.
- 3.3 To ensure the process for progressing any changes is undertaken efficiently and effectively in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.

### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 At the meeting of the Cabinet held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022, Members considered a report from officers on options and the rationale for considering alternative ways of meeting the nutritional needs of the most vulnerable members of our communities.
- 4.2 The report set out the results from a review process and outlined four options for consideration for the future delivery of the service.

**Option 1:** to continue the service as it currently operates with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal.

**Option 2:** to reorganise the existing internal service with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal.

**Option 3:** to reorganise the existing internal service and provide a hot/frozen Community Meal Home Delivery Service with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal.

**Option 4:** to cease the current service and support service users to find alternative options.

- 4.3 Following consideration, approval was given to initiate a consultation on the preferred service change proposal of Option 3, together with the other options, in respect of the Community Meals Service.
- 4.4 The meals are currently distributed to service users in their homes by 28 delivery staff using 14 vehicles. Once a preferred option is decided upon, and demand for the service is established, the service will undertake a robust review

of delivery rounds to ensure that the routes are the most efficient and cost effective with the aim of reducing fuel costs and our carbon emissions.

## **5. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The consultation report, prepared in respect of this proposal, is attached in Appendix 1. It contains a summary of the online survey responses, emails and telephone calls received during the consultation period and, where required, the appropriate clarification to any issues raised.
- 5.2 The consultation process resulted in 416 responses being received via the online survey, which was available for the duration of the consultation period on the Council's website, and a total of 6 emails and a few telephone calls to the contact centre regarding the consultation.
- 5.3 In addition, a meeting was held with Community Meals staff and their Trade Union representatives on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022, to explain the proposals and allow staff to ask any questions and participate in the consultation process.
- 5.4 Out of the 416 responses received; Table 1 summarises respondents' views on the proposals. However, not all respondents answered on all options presented.

<b>Table 1: Respondents' Views on the Four Proposals</b>				
<b>Option</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Yes (Agree)</b>	<b>No (Disagree)</b>	<b>Do Not Know</b>
1	392	269 (68.6%)	88 (22.4%)	35 (9%)
2	368	105 (28.5%)	184 (50.0%)	79 (21.5%)
3	394	112 (28.4%)	267 (67.8%)	15 (3.8%)
4	375	6 (1.6%)	353 (94.1%)	16 (4.3%)

- 5.5 The main themes emerging from the consultation process are:

Overall, 67.8% of respondents disagree with the preferred Option 3. The level of disagreement was higher for service users (76.4%) than those respondents who said they were members of the public (53.5%), with 42.4% of the public respondents agreeing with the preferred option.

- There was general disagreement with the option due to reasons such as the cost-of-living crisis, vulnerability and isolation of service users and a frozen meal being cooked rather than a prime cooked meal.
- A large number of comments stated the importance of a hot freshly cooked meal for older people using the service.
- Respondents suggested that many of the service users would not be able to heat up a meal themselves, as it could be dangerous, as some service users do not have the capability or may forget. However, it must be noted that Option 3 offers service users a hot meal and no service users will have to heat their own meals up unless they choose to receive a frozen meal to be consumed at their discretion and convenience.

- There were mixed views on the price increase. The general feeling from those who disagreed was that the price increase was not value for money or too much of an increase, given the current cost-of-living crisis. However, several respondents felt that the increase was reasonable, especially if it helped maintain the service. In the event of service users facing financial hardship, staff will continue to highlight Cost of Living support and advice from the Welsh Government and UK Government, which can be found on the Council's website (<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ConsumerAdviceandMoneyMatters/CostofLivingSupport/CostofLivingSupport.aspx>) and GOV.UK website, e.g. Wales Fuel Support Scheme, income and disability benefits. This information will be included in the letter sent to service users advising them of the outcome of the consultation and the preferred option for the future of the Community Meals Service and on the Council's website.
- Several relatives of service users suggested that the proposal would impact on family members who would have to step in to help. However, as highlighted in the above third bullet point, the frozen meals will be cooked and delivered hot to service users. They would be supported in the same way as they currently receive a hot meal, although it is acknowledged that the meal will be a frozen cooked meal.

5.5.1 Overall, 81.0% of respondents stated that they would prefer a delivered hot meal, with 91.2% being service users. Those respondents who were members of the public were more likely to agree to receiving a mixture of both hot and frozen meals (50.0%), than service users themselves (7.2%). Also, respondents indicated that they would prefer a prime cooked meal to be delivered rather than a frozen cooked meal.

5.5.2 A total of 60.7% of respondents said they would not be able to store and cook a frozen meal by themselves, or if they could, they would need to be supported by a relative, neighbour, family or carer. The highest proportion stating this were staff members (88.9%), but it should be noted that only 8 staff members responded no to this question in the survey, so the sample is not representative of the majority of staff. However, as explained in paragraph 5.6, the frozen meal will be cooked and delivered as normal to service users and there will be no need for service users to struggle to cook or store their meal. Support will also be provided to plate the meal for service users.

5.5.3 Overall, 57.3% of respondents, of which 66.9% were service users, said they would continue to use the proposed hot or frozen meal delivery service. This could result in a reduction of service take-up and, as a consequence, there would be a negative impact on the level of subsidisation required.

5.5.4 Some of the respondents commented that the service provided more than a meal and a number of the service users relied on the social interaction and support of the Council staff who deliver the meals, especially those who have no family. This support will continue under the preferred option, which is Option 3, to ensure the health and well-being of service users is checked.

- 5.5.5 Overall, 68.6% of respondents agreed with Option 1 and thought it should have been the preferred option, with 79.7 % of service users, 73.6% of relatives and 73.5% of staff agreeing with this position. A number of respondents suggested that they would be happy with an increase in cost to keep the service as it is. Other comments mainly focused on the need to retain the status quo for the service or not to increase charges.
- 5.5.6 In total, only 28.5% of respondents agreed with Option 2, with 30.1% of service users in agreement. Although, 37.0% of staff respondents did agree with Option 2. As with Option 1, respondents suggested that the service should continue as it is, with some happy to pay more. There were also some concerns expressed as to the impact on staff, including redundancy.
- 5.5.7 The vast majority of all respondents (94.1%) disagreed with Option 4.

### **Benefits and Implementation of the Preferred Option**

- 5.6 Option 3 allows the Council to retain an affordable Community Meals Service, which is competitive in price, maintains social contact with service users and offers delivery of either a hot or frozen meal.
- 5.7 In comparison, four Welsh Local Authorities provide a similar Community Meals Service to Option 3, whereby meals are bought in and regenerated, and the price per meal (2 courses) ranges from £4.50 to £5.15. In addition, a further 15 Welsh Local Authorities do not provide a Community Meals Service, and in some instances, service users are signposted to an external provider that provides a frozen meal delivery service only, where a typical price per meal (2 courses) is more than £5.00.
- 5.8 A hot meal will continue to be delivered by Community Meals staff to service users' homes Monday to Friday, between 11.30am and 2.00pm. The daily visit will provide that all important social interaction and welfare check, which will reduce the impact of loneliness for some service users who have no family or where family are unable to assist, providing peace of mind and reassurance. Assistance will also be provided to plate the meal, where this is required.
- 5.9 Continuation of the service will enable and empower service users to remain supported in their own home, maintaining their independence and providing a balanced diet. Dietary and allergen needs will continue to be met.
- 5.10 Additional flexibility will be offered with the choice of having a frozen meal delivered, which can be heated at a time most suitable to the service user.
- 5.11 In order to implement the preferred Option 3, all current service users will need to be notified of the proposed change. This will include a written letter of communication to each service user and their carer(s), where relevant, explaining the revised option available to them. In addition, the Council's website will be updated and provide details of the preferred option, including frequently asked questions.

- 5.12 Adaptations to the existing central kitchen will be programmed to redesign the food storage and preparation areas. This will result in an increase in freezer capacity, a picking area, trolley storage area and installation of appropriate regeneration warming ovens in readiness for the delivery service.
- 5.13 Existing redundant equipment will be recycled to existing school premises.
- 5.14 New Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point documentation and food preparation will need to be completed and approved by Environmental Health. This would require new kitchen food safety critical control procedures and microbiological testing of the purchased prepared meals, specifically through the frozen meal picking stage and hot holding delivery stage.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was prepared and has been reviewed and updated to include further mitigated risks following the consultation. This is attached in Appendix 4 (and an accompanying action plan at Appendix 4i). This document outlines the proposal in further detail in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.2 There are 8 negative and 9 neutral equality and diversity implications associated with this report. These risks will be mitigated by a range of actions as detailed in the impact assessment.

## **7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been prepared and provides further detail in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The outcome of this assessment is provided in Appendix 5.
- 7.2 There are no negative or adverse Welsh Language implications associated with this report.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The Consultation period commenced on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and ended on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023.
- 8.2 849 recipients of the Community Meals Service were posted a letter, informing them of the options, a survey to complete and some frequently asked questions to assist them with any queries they may have. A freepost address was available for return of the survey. The frequently asked questions can be viewed in Appendix 3.
- 8.3 The online survey was also available on the Council's website for anyone to complete for the duration of the consultation period. A consultation email address and telephone number were also available for enquiries.

- 8.4 A meeting was held with all Community Meals staff, who could attend, and their Trade Union representatives to explain the options and allow them to ask any questions. There were concerns that contingency plans would need to be put in place if only one driver is in operation, the risk of finding a service user who needs medical attention and the quality and option of the frozen meals, which will need to be reviewed.
- 8.5 In addition, staff expressed their concerns about job losses and requested consideration be given to redeployment for those who did not secure a post in any proposed new structure or elected for voluntary redundancy. The Director of Education and Inclusion Services commented that every effort would be made to support employees who would be keen to secure alternative employment in Catering Services where at all possible.

## **9. SCRUTINY ENGAGEMENT**

- 9.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was provided with an opportunity on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 to consider the proposed changes to the service and provide feedback and comments. The feedback can be viewed in Appendix 2.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 A summary of the estimated financial implications of each option is set out in Table 2.

<b>Table 2: Financial Implications of Service Review Options</b>			
<b>Option</b>	<b>Estimated Total Annual Revenue Savings (£'000)</b>	<b>2022/23 Budgeted Subsidy Per Meal (£)</b>	<b>Estimated Subsidy Per Meal (£)</b>
1. Current Status Quo Level of Service with Increased Service User Charges	63 – 190	5.07	4.65 – 3.65
2. Reorganised Service Delivery with Increased Service User Charges	362 – 489	5.07	2.28 – 1.28
3. Hot/Frozen Community Meal Delivery Service with Increased Service User Charges	427	5.07	1.73
4. Cease to Deliver an In-House Service	546	5.07	0

- 10.2 In addition, where no appropriate redeployment opportunities are identified, redundancy costs will need to be met by the Council.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 There is no legislative requirement to deliver a Community Meals Service. However, in considering this report the Council needs to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The Act and accompanying Part 4 Code of Practice sets out where a Local Authority has carried out an assessment, which has revealed that if a person has care and support needs then the Local Authority must decide if those needs meet the eligibility criteria and, if they do, access to services that meet those needs must be offered.
- 11.2 Any employment issues that arise will need to be considered in conjunction with Human Resources, and in accordance with any relevant policies and legislative provisions.

## **12. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 12.1 This proposal is aligned to the Council's Corporate Plan 'Making a Difference 2020-2024' and the priority 'Ensuring people: ***are independent, healthy and successful***'.
- 12.2 In addition, the report considers one of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 wellbeing goal of: A Healthier Wales and a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised.

## **13. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS**

- 13.1 This applies to all electoral wards.

## **14. CONCLUSION**

- 14.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of the attached Consultation Report and give officers approval to progress with their agreed preferred option, as outlined in section 2 of this report.

**Other Information: -**

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee-**  
Overview & Scrutiny Committee



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**  
**AS AMENDED BY**  
**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**  
**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**CABINET**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY 2023**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN  
DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH  
PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS**

**Item: SERVICE REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE**

**Background Papers**

Service Review of the Community Meals Service Report to Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup>  
November 2022.

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s38377/Service%20Review%20of%20the%20Community%20Meals%20Service.pdf?LLL=0>

**Officer to contact:**

Andrea Richards, Service Director of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Transformation

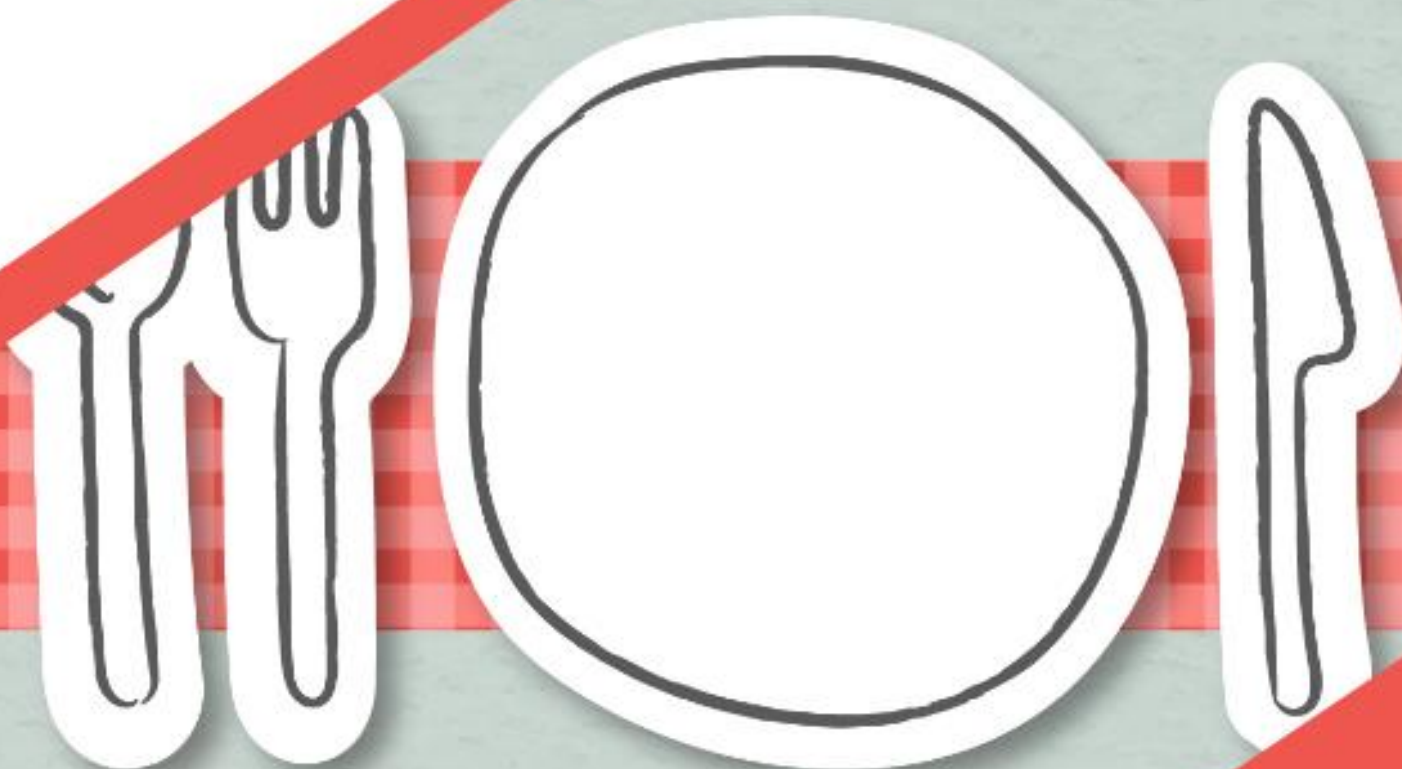
Dewch i  
siarad RhCT  
Let's talk  
RCT

# COMMUNITY MEAL SERVICES (MEALS ON WHEELS)

## Consultation Report

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC

January 2023



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the findings of the Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) consultation.
- The consultation was conducted in-house. The consultation period ran from the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and ended on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023.
- Views were sought on a number of proposed options for the future of the Community Meals Service.
- The following methods were used to consult with stakeholders:
  - A letter was sent to all service users (849)
  - FAQ sheet delivered to all service users.
  - An online questionnaire.
  - Promotion online on the Council's website/social media.
  - A telephone number for the Council's Contact Centre.
  - A dedicated email address.
  - Freepost option for returns.
- The majority of respondents were service users or relatives/friends of service users (61.4%).
- Overall, the majority of respondents disagree with the preferred option 3 (67.8%). The levels of disagreement are higher for service users (76.4%), than those respondents who said they were members of the public (53.5%), with 42.4% of the public respondents agreeing with the preferred option.
- Respondents were asked to comment if they disagreed with Option 3 and comments other than general disagreement, stated the importance of hot fresh meals for older people using the service and suggested that many of the service users would not be able to heat up a meal themselves.
- Respondents were asked if they had any comments in relation to the proposal to increase the price of a meal by £0.50. The general feeling from those who disagreed was that the price increase was not worth it or too much of an increase, given the current cost of living. A number of respondents felt that the increase was reasonable, especially if it helped keep the service going.
- Respondents were asked if they would prefer a delivered hot meal or a frozen meal that could be heated at a time to suit the service user. Overall, 81.0% of respondents stated that they would prefer a hot meal, 91.2% of service users. Those respondents who were members of the public were more likely to agree with a mixture of both (50.0%), than service users themselves (7.2%).
- When asked if they would be able to store and cook a frozen meal by themselves or if they would need to be supported by a relative, neighbour, friend or carer, 60.7% of respondents said they would not be able to do this by themselves, with the highest proportion stating this being staff (88.9%).

- Overall, the majority of respondents said they would continue to use the service (57.3%), with 66.9% of service users saying that they would.
- Respondents were asked how the recommended proposal option 3 would impact them or their families. The themes identified included, some of the respondents reported that the service provided more than a meal and a number of the service users relied on the company and support of the Council staff who deliver the meals, especially those who had no family. The inability of some of the service users to heat up their own meals was reiterated.
- The majority of respondents agreed with option 1 and thought it should have been the preferred option (68.6%), with 79.7% of service users agreeing, 73.6% of relatives and 73.5% of staff. Of the comments received on option 1, a number suggested that they would be happy with an increase in cost to keep the service as it is.
- Overall, only 28.5% of respondents agreed with option 2, with 30.1% of service users in agreement.
- Respondents were asked if option 4 should have been the preferred option. The vast majority of all respondents disagreed with option 4, overall, 94.1% disagreed.
- Overall, 416 responses were received to the consultation survey and 6 emails were received.

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) consultation.
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines some brief background to the consultation process
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.
- 1.4 Section 4 provides the results of the survey.
- 1.5 Section 5 presents the feedback received from a number of emails.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council is facing significant financial challenges and is considering the remodelling of key service areas to contribute to the shortfall in funding. In response to rising inflation, food and energy costs, and the financial pressures faced by the Council this year and beyond, the Community Meals Service has been assessed and there is a need to consult on the proposed options for the future of the Service.
- 2.2 A review of the service has been undertaken and several options for the future of the service have been evaluated and were put out for consultation;

### **The Preferred Option for Consultation: Option 3 - Hot/Frozen Community Meal Delivery Service with Increased Service User Charges**

This option would consist of reorganising the existing Community Meals Service to provide service users with a choice of either a hot or frozen meal delivery service, depending on their preference. This will allow the Council to continue to provide a hot meal service and maintain that important contact with service users. In addition, a frozen meal service will allow flexibility to service users to choose and heat their meal when they want, rather than being restricted to a delivery time. Part of this option would also entail a proposed price increase of £0.50 to service users, which would increase the price of the meal from £4.05 to £4.55. This option would require less staff to deliver the service

### **Option 1: Continue the existing service as it currently operates with increased service user charges**

This option would continue to provide the existing Community Meals Service as it currently operates, which produces a prime cooked meal, with proposed increased service user charges of either £0.50, £1.00 or £1.50 per meal.

### **Option 2: Reorganise the existing service with increased service user charges**

This option would consist of reorganising the existing Community Meals Service, which produces a prime cooked meal, with proposed increased service user charges of either £0.50, £1.00 or £1.50 per meal. This option would require less staff to deliver the service.

### **Option 4: Cease to Deliver an In-house Community Meals Service**

This option would consist of ceasing the current service and supporting service users to find alternative options.



### 3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The Community Meals consultation was conducted in-house and ran from the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and ended on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023. This section presents the methodology which was utilised to promote and collect the data.
- 3.2 The consultation used an online survey which was built using Snap XMP. The survey aimed to gain feedback on the proposals.
- 3.3 A printed format of the survey along with a letter and FAQ sheet was sent to each of the 849 service users, with a freepost address available for return, as well as the option to return the forms to the Community Meals drivers.
- 3.4 To ensure wide outreach and involvement of the wider community the consultation was promoted on the [Councils online consultation webpage](#) to encourage engagement. An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation on the Snap XMP survey.
- 3.5 Respondents were encouraged to write in using a dedicated email address [consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk), in order to allow them to share their views. Overall, there were a total of 6 emails/letters received from the public relating to the consultation.
- 3.6 A telephone consultation option was in place, through the Council's contact centre. This option allows people to discuss their views or request consultation materials. Individual call backs were available on request and a consultation Freepost address was available for postal responses.
- 3.7 The proposals were presented and discussed at the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
- 3.8 Overall, 416 survey responses and 6 emails were received to the consultation.

## 4 Questionnaire Results

- 4.1 The following section outlines the results from the online and paper questionnaires, which received 416 responses. A selection of comments were provided and the full list of the comments will be provided to Cabinet and senior officers to assist with decision making.
- 4.2 Respondents were asked whether they were responding as a service user, relative, carer, member of the public or staff. The table below shows that the majority of respondents were service users or relatives/friends of service users (61.4%).

*Note: the tables that include type of respondent do not add up to 100% as this was a multiple response question. The base is the total number of respondents, some of whom will have provided more than 1 response.*

**Table 1: Respondents**

Counts Analysis % Respondents	
Base	402 100.0%
Are you:	
A service user of Community Meals (Meals on Wheels)?	152 37.8%
A relative / neighbour / friend of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	95 23.6%
A carer of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	26 6.5%
A member of the public?	100 24.9%
A member of staff?	35 8.7%
None of the above?	10 2.5%

### **Option 3**

- 4.3 Respondents were asked whether they agreed with a number of options, including the preferred option 3.

#### **The Preferred Option for Consultation: Option 3 - Hot/Frozen Community Meal Delivery Service with Increased Service User Charges**

This option would consist of re-organising the existing Community Meals Service to provide service users with a choice of either a hot or frozen meal delivery service, depending on their preference, allowing the Council to continue to provide a hot meal service and maintain important contact with service users. In addition, a frozen meal service would allow flexibility to service users to choose and heat their meal when they want, rather than being restricted to a delivery time.

Part of this option would also entail a proposed price increase of £0.50 to service users, which would increase the price of the meal from £4.05 to £4.55. This option would require less staff to deliver the service

**Table 2: Agreement with Option 3**

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	Do you agree with option 3?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Do not know
Base	394	112 28.4%	267 67.8%	15 3.8%
Are you:				
A service user of Community Meals (Meals on Wheels)?	148	30 20.3%	113 76.4%	5 3.4%
A relative / neighbour / friend of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	94	26 27.7%	65 69.1%	3 3.2%
A carer of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	26	8 30.8%	16 61.5%	2 7.7%
A member of the public?	99	42 42.4%	53 53.5%	4 4.0%
A member of staff?	34	9 26.5%	24 70.6%	1 2.9%
None of the above?	9	3 33.3%	6 66.7%	- -

- 4.4 Overall, the majority of respondents disagree with the preferred option 3 (67.8%). The levels of disagreement are higher for service users (76.4%), than those respondents who said they were members of the public (53.5%), with 42.4% of the public respondents agreeing with the preferred option.

### **Comments Option 3**

- 4.5 Respondents were asked to comment if they disagreed with Option 3 and the following are the main themes that emerged:

#### **General Disagreement**

*"This is privatising the service - eventually quality will suffer, prices will rise and rise. You have decimated the home care service by going to outside sources, the same will happen here. The "important " contact with service users will be reduced to deliveroo! Continuity is important, the current service does far more than deliver a meal. When prices rise, users will stop ordering and then you will have poor ...."*

*"Cost of living crisis is causing people to suffer enough and now the council are denying the vulnerable a hot meal. Vile"*

*"I'm a relative of one of your clients and I think it's disgraceful on what you're doing. these vulnerable people want something warm and freshly made inside in this extreme cold weather not this rubbish frozen foods what your offering... You really need to look on what you're doing here ..I'm sure you can save money somewhere else.."*

*"It's disgusting and disappointing that you think this is an OK way to treat anybody let alone our most vulnerable."*

*"My gosh that's crazy. That physical appearance every day is so important to those living on their own. When caring for a family member. I knew someone would call on them in between my visits and the amount of times they called me because they were not happy with something, I was so grateful. I knew I could have my own lunch and take a break and knew someone else would take the responsibility of dishing out the food. Small act but huge in a carers eyes..."*

*"This is ridiculous, this is for old people who are not able to cook for themselves. These people rely on this service and older people don't like change. Why would you want to change something that has worked for so many years. All the council wants to do is make money the council don't care about other people lives and how it will affect them not only the older people but the people who run this and do a damn good job at it."*

### **Hot fresh meals**

- 4.6 A large number of comments stated the importance of hot fresh meals for older people using the service:

*"A frozen meal can be bought for £1.00 in Iceland? We want fresh meals not frozen"*

*"A hot frozen meal is nothing compared to a freshly cooked hot meal for our vulnerable and elderly"*

*"As a member of staff, I know first-hand that the clients don't like, or want the frozen meals. Many don't have a microwave and some not even an oven. The purpose of this service was to provide a freshly cooked meal daily. A frozen meal can be bought for just over £1, at many supermarkets. To expect them to pay £ 4.55 for one is disgraceful"*

*"Because I feel fresh food for the elderly is a much better option old people do not like the frozen food if this option 3 goes ahead there will be no more meals on wheels because people won't have them"*

*"Do not like the frozen meals otherwise I would buy them from a store"*

*"A Frozen meal option is not feasible as the frozen meals themselves are not value for money compared with other frozen meals available by other providers also the frozen meals provided by meals on wheels are not a good quality product and are not popular among the service users....."*

### **Needs help with Cooking**

- 4.7 Respondents suggested that many of the service users would not be able to heat up a meal themselves, as it could be dangerous, as some service users do not have the capability to cook or may forget.

*"A lot of customers are unable to do their own meal prep, the workers of meals on wheels do it for them. Most customers like they're delivery times as a lot of the older generation forgot to eat so by having regular delivery's that make sure to eat correctly"*

*"A lot of these service users rely on a hot meal as they are unable to cook themselves. If you are going to serve a frozen meal & then they are left to cook it, a lot of them are unable to see or use the microwave. Or if you mean cook the frozen meal your end this meal would end up being reheated twice as some of the meals are delivered way before lunchtime. A lot of service users rely on this service because they haven't got anyone to support them with this task."*

*"I need a hot meal every day, I can't use a microwave to warm a hot meal"*

*"I strongly disagree with this decision because I totally rely on a freshly cooked meal every day, if I don't fancy eating it when it arrives I know I can reheat it later, I would not be able to reheat a frozen hot meal. Keep it as it is."*

*"My Dad is 84 who suffers with Dementia / Alzheimers, Diabetic amongst other conditions. He cannot operate the microwave and wouldn't remember where the food was kept. I work full time and therefore my dad wouldn't have anything to eat until late evening. Once a frozen meal is cooked it cannot be re-heated. This service is a lifeline to my dad. Surely cuts from top management instead of vital services to the elderly and the vulnerable."*

*"Well for one not a lot of elderly people I know can afford to use their ovens and quite a few I know either don't own or know how to work a microwave. I have 2 relatives that use this service, my great aunt who is 97 and my uncle who is 71 and they both heavily rely on this service. They get a nice hot meal and they're ready for when it arrives. If they had a frozen one then that would mean using precious money and energy to heat them up, which quite frankly neither of them have much of....."*

### **Price Increase**

- 4.8 Respondents were asked if they had any comments in relation to the proposal to increase the price of a meal by £0.50.

The general feeling from those who disagreed was that the price increase was not worth it or too much of an increase, given the current cost of living:

*"50p too much of an increase"*

*"Cost of living for elderly is already tough. Some won't be able to afford this"*

*"Not worth it for a frozen meal"*

*"The frozen meals are not worth the Increase. As a frozen meal can be bought cheaper from a supermarket"*

*"Too expensive"*

*"This is vital for my mother to have a meal midday but 50p per meal= £3.50 increase each week. That is a huge rise when on a pension. With everything else going up"*

*"Price increase is not acceptable to services users on a low income"*

- 4.9 A number of respondents felt that the increase was reasonable, especially if it helped keep the service going, comments included:

*"50p is reasonable"*

*"Fair increase of 50p - 1.00"*

*“Happy to pay £1.50 more”*

*“I understand the necessity. It won't affect my mother she will pay the increase to continue to have a freshly cooked meal and the daily social contact from the lovely ladies who deliver them”*

*“In my opinion the increase is fair giving the cost of living and the price of everything going up”*

*“The proposed increase would be fine if it were a fresh meal most fresh cooked meals are priced higher i.e., carvery however for a frozen microwave meal you could go to any shop and pick up meals for £1”*

### **Type of Meal**

- 4.10 Respondents were asked if they would prefer a delivered hot meal or a frozen meal that could be heated at a time to suit the service user. Overall, 81.0% of respondents stated that they would prefer a hot meal, 91.2% of service users.

Those respondents who were members of the public were more likely to agree with a mixture of both (50.0%), than service users themselves (7.2%).

**Table 3: Preferred option of food delivery**

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	If you are a service user, would you prefer a delivered h...		
		Hot	Frozen	Mixture of Both
Base	279	226 81.0%	4 1.4%	49 17.6%
Are you:				
A service user of Community Meals (Meals on Wheels)?	125	114 91.2%	2 1.6%	9 7.2%
A relative / neighbour / friend of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	75	62 82.7%	1 1.3%	12 16.0%
A carer of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	24	21 87.5%	- -	3 12.5%
A member of the public?	48	23 47.9%	1 2.1%	24 50.0%
A member of staff?	14	12 85.7%	- -	2 14.3%
None of the above?	6	5 83.3%	- -	1 16.7%

- 4.11 Service users were then asked if they would be able to store and cook a frozen meal by themselves or if they would need to be supported by a relative, neighbour, friend or carer. Overall, 60.7% of respondents said they would not be able to do this by themselves, with the highest proportion stating this being staff (88.9%).

**Table 4: Responses to food storage methods**

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	If you are a service user, would you be able to store and...		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Do not know
Base	270	84 31.1%	164 60.7%	22 8.1%
Are you:				
A service user of Community Meals (Meals on Wheels)?	127	45 35.4%	79 62.2%	3 2.4%
A relative / neighbour / friend of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	75	19 25.3%	51 68.0%	5 6.7%
A carer of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	24	5 20.8%	16 66.7%	3 12.5%
A member of the public?	42	15 35.7%	17 40.5%	10 23.8%
A member of staff?	9	1 11.1%	8 88.9%	- -
None of the above?	6	2 33.3%	3 50.0%	1 16.7%

- 4.12 Service users were asked if they would continue to use the proposed hot or frozen meal delivery service. Overall, the majority of respondents said they would continue to use the service (57.3%), with 66.9% of service users saying that they would.

**Table 5: Responses to users' preference of hot or frozen meal**

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	If you are a service user, would you continue to use the ...		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Do not know
Base	260	149 57.3%	69 26.5%	42 16.2%
Are you:				
A service user of Community Meals (Meals on Wheels)?	127	85 66.9%	27 21.3%	15 11.8%
A relative / neighbour / friend of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	71	41 57.7%	19 26.8%	11 15.5%
A carer of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	23	7 30.4%	11 47.8%	5 21.7%
A member of the public?	38	18 47.4%	12 31.6%	8 21.1%
A member of staff?	7	3 42.9%	3 42.9%	1 14.3%



None of the above?	6	3 50.0%	- -	3 50.0%
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- 4.13 Finally on option 3, the respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families.

The themes identified included:

### **Social Interaction**

- 4.14 Some of the respondents reported that the service provided more than a meal and a number of the service users relied on the company and support of the Council staff who deliver the meals, especially those who had no family.

*".... I believe that if frozen meals are introduced as a weekday service in my opinion the Mow service will eventually shut down and that would be a disaster for the elderly that so rely on a hot meal and someone calling every day!"*

*"Some of our clients only see us workers and look forward to seeing our faces and chat...."*

*"The impact of some people do not see the delivery person might have an effect on their wellbeing"*

*"They would need family help to reheat, some don't have family"*

*"If the service was to close they'd lose the 1 to 1 conversion and a regular home cooked meal and more pressure to family to provide that when most work full time"*

### **Elderly/Disability:**

- 4.15 The inability of some of the service users to heat up their own meals was reiterated here.

*"I cannot read the cooking instructions on the label as they are too small. Would have to rely on someone else to cook and prepare my meal"*

*"It would....require someone to reheat. Therefore, If service user is disabled, they would have to wait for carer to come to reheat"*

*"Living alone my relative relies heavily on the hot meal service, it's imperative that this service isn't removed if they are to continue living independently. The only alternative would be a care home with no family living nearby to assist with meals"*

*“Some people sadly don't have a choice and would have to find a way to warm their own meal...some people don't have anyone to rely on and look forward to a warm meal provided to them”*

*“There will be no one calling in to Mam every lunchtime. She does not like the frozen meals. The reason she has the meals is she is physically unable to prepare a hot meal for herself.”*

*“The cost will impact but as I work my mother 96 lives alone so has no choice and is dependent on this mid-day meal that arrives hot as my mother is too frail to heat herself.”*

*“My mother forgets there is frozen meals. The fresh are out on the side for her. She remembers them when they are on the side for her. Many weekends when I'm away the frozen are still in her freezer.”*

#### **Increased Burden on Friends & Family:**

- 4.16 A number of relatives and service users suggested that the proposal (preferred option 3) would impact upon family members who would have to step in to help.

*“.....I don't have to rely on family for meals, my family work, got their own families I can't expect them to cook and why should I worked all my life payed my tax's and now the old age are forgotten about”*

*“Family member depends on having a hot meal due to being unable to move freely around their home easily this means they would have to wait for family members to get home from work which isn't always the same times”*

*“I cannot read the cooking instructions on the label as they are too small. Would have to rely on someone else to cook and prepare my meal”*

*“It would highly impact myself and my family as I would have to work my FULL time job to come home and cook a FRESH meal for my grandparents as I will not accept them eating frozen meals provided by yourselves which would mean me doing more whereas now I rest easy knowing they have had a freshly cooked meal every day.”*

## Option 1

### **Option 1: Continue the existing service as it currently operates with increased service user charges**

This option would continue to provide the existing Community Meals Service as it currently operates, which produces a prime cooked meal, with proposed increased service user charges of either £0.50, £1.00 or £1.50 per meal.

- 4.17 Respondents were asked if option 1 should have been the preferred option. The majority of respondents agreed with option 1 and thought it should have been the preferred option (68.6%), with 79.7% of service users agreeing, 73.6% of relatives and 73.5% of staff.

**Table 6: Agreement with option 1**

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	Do you think this should have been the preferred option?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Do not know
Base	392	269 68.6%	88 22.4%	35 8.9%
Are you:				
A service user of Community Meals (Meals on Wheels)?	148	118 79.7%	18 12.2%	12 8.1%
A relative / neighbour / friend of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	91	67 73.6%	16 17.6%	8 8.8%
A carer of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	26	14 53.8%	8 30.8%	4 15.4%
A member of the public?	99	51 51.5%	38 38.4%	10 10.1%
A member of staff?	34	25 73.5%	6 17.6%	3 8.8%
None of the above?	10	4 40.0%	5 50.0%	1 10.0%

### **Increase price for service to continue:**

- 4.18 Of the comments received on option 1, a number suggested that they would be happy with an increase in cost to keep the service as it is.

*“A pound increase is OK”*

*“A price rise in hot fresh meals is understandable. It's obvious anyone would chose a hot fresh meal over an overpriced frozen”*

*“Everyone knows about price rising so a rise in a hot fresh meal delivered and put on a plate for users that have no family members is well worth it”*

*I fully support the above option if we have to pay more then so be it.*

*“I would only continue to use the service if it was a 50p increase. I could not afford an increase of £1.50 per meal.”*

**Service should be free or continue as is:**

- 4.19 Other comments mainly focussed on the need for the service to stay as it is now or to not increase charges.

*“As previously stated, this service should be free, or very heavily subsidised.”*

*We have to be careful about the amount of increase due to the cost of living standards for all*

*“Currently having meals delivered is working well, family members and members of the public have less hassle and you know that they are having a nice hot meal through this cold weather. Some of the service users need to have a hot meal as they have no options to heat their meals”*

*“I think this should stay as it is as it is a vital service for many people.”*

*The current operation of meals on wheels has been brilliant for years, whoever wants to change it that person/people, are very silly. Maybe if their family relied on this service they would understand better*

*This current system works well for both service users and work force so why change it!*

*“Having paid national insurance contributions my whole life, and full council tax, I believe this is a service that the council should provide.”*

## Option 2

### **Option 2: Reorganise the existing service with increased service user charges**

This option would consist of reorganising the existing Community Meals Service, which produces a prime cooked meal, with proposed increased service user charges of either £0.50, £1.00 or £1.50 per meal. This option would require less staff to deliver the service.

4.20 Respondents were asked if option 2 should have been the preferred option.

Overall, only 28.5% of respondents agreed with option 2, with 30.1% of service users in agreement. Although 37.0% of staff respondents did agree with option 2.

**Table 7: Agreement with option 2**

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	Do you think this should have been the preferred option?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Do not know
Base	368	105 28.5%	184 50.0%	79 21.5%
Are you:				
A service user of Community Meals (Meals on Wheels)?	136	41 30.1%	64 47.1%	31 22.8%
A relative / neighbour / friend of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	93	25 26.9%	42 45.2%	26 28.0%
A carer of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	26	3 11.5%	16 61.5%	7 26.9%
A member of the public?	92	19 20.7%	59 64.1%	14 15.2%
A member of staff?	27	10 37.0%	13 48.1%	4 14.8%
None of the above?	10	8 80.0%	1 10.0%	1 10.0%

4.21 As with the previous option comments mainly suggested that the service should continue as it is, with some respondents happy to pay more.

### **Happy to pay more**

*“Again I’m happy paying more for my meal”*

*“I agree perhaps some changes need to be made due to costs but not the actual meal.”*

*"I would rather pay more to have fresh cooked food than frozen meals. The elderly looked out for us and it's our turn to look out for them."*

- 4.22 With option 2 there were some concerns as to the impact the proposal would have on staff, including any potential for redundancy.

### **Concerns for Staff**

*"Again vital service and shouldn't impact staff"*

*"Again why is it front line service staff and the service users have to suffer. It is so wrong."*

*"I do not agree with existing staff being made redundant life is difficult"*

*"If increase is same cost for option1 and 2 then I don't see why staff should be cut"*

*"Less staff should not be considered at a time of such financial difficulty"*

*"Do not want the service to lose staff or hours"*

*"I do not support the reduction in staff some people who live alone rely on this as the only form of human contact each day."*

## Option 4

### **Option 4: Cease to Deliver an In-house Community Meals Service**

This option would consist of ceasing the current service and supporting service users to find alternative options.

- 4.23 Respondents were asked if option 4 should have been the preferred option. The vast majority of all respondents disagreed with option 4, overall, 94.1% disagreed.

**Table 8: Agreement with option 4**

Counts Analysis % Respondents	Total	Do you think this should have been the preferred option?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Do not know
Base	375	6 1.6%	353 94.1%	16 4.3%
Are you:				
A service user of Community Meals (Meals on Wheels)?	136	- -	126 92.6%	10 7.4%
A relative / neighbour / friend of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	94	3 3.2%	90 95.7%	1 1.1%
A carer of a Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) user?	26	1 3.8%	25 96.2%	- -
A member of the public?	94	1 1.1%	89 94.7%	4 4.3%
A member of staff?	31	- -	31 100.0%	- -
None of the above?	10	1 10.0%	8 80.0%	1 10.0%

- 4.24 Comments included:

#### **Against this option:**

*“100 percent don't want this option at all family member have had for yrs plus the delivery girls provide a social care when delivery meal”*

*“Absolutely shocking, not only do the elderly receive a hot meal, they also know someone is coming in daily to make sure they're OK.”*

*“Ceasing the current service would have a significant impact on members of the public and in particular those that are high risk of falls, decreased function and hospital discharges”*

*“Definitely not this option should never be considered as this service is essential for the elderly that are not capable.”*

*“Definitely not This service is vital to many, the only people they see and a hot meal. Some don't have the facilities to warm meals or even the ability/health to do so. One warm meal a day for some, is a 'life saver'!”*

*“During covid 19 these meals became vital to a lot of people whose family couldn't get to them and also people who couldn't get out themselves and have continued to be a support going on enabling families not worrying because they know they are having a warm notorious meal and are being checked up on”*

### **Any Other Comments**

- 4.25 The following are a selection of comments received and mainly mirrored the comments that had already been made.

#### **Keep the Service as it is/Service should continue**

*“There is a need for the service but should be cost effective for the authority and consistent to those receiving the meals.”*

*“You can't stop this hot meal service, what have the elderly got left !!!!”*

*“Please consider leaving the service at the existing option as this service is essential for the elderly.”*

*“We need to ensure that these provided meal continues, even at a slight increase.”*

*“Would be Happy with a price increase”*

*“Keep it to as it is and if that means charging a little extra then so be it.”*

*“I am prepared to pay the extra cost for delivery of hot meal”*

*“Vulnerable Service Users/Loneliness”*

*“I would think it would panic some users with withdrawal of service!!”*

*“Not only does meals on wheels provide food but they also provide company and they check on their customers. Many customers don't have family to rely on so this service is important”*

*“Please consider leaving the service at the existing option as this service is essential for the elderly.”*



*“The elderly and infirm that access this service sometimes the delivery ladies are the only people they see all day. Please don’t forget the elderly in particular in this Borough need to be taken care of”*

*“This service is a vital and important community service provided locally for elderly and vulnerable people some of who only see the meals on wheels staff and no one else from day to day. This service is a vital lifeline in enabling people to stay within their own homes and also an important service to people while recovering from operations and illnesses. It would be a devastating loss to our communities if this service is ended”*

#### Make Cuts to other Services/Managers

*“Cut from top management!”*

*“Maybe cutting jobs from higher up, with huge salaries could save a very important service.”*

*“There are plenty of other savings that can be introduced by RCT look around for gods sake”*

#### About you

- 4.26 Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. Respondents were asked how the proposals affect you because of?:

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Ethnicity
4. Disability
5. Sexuality
6. Religion / belief
7. Gender identity
8. Relationship status
9. Pregnancy
10. Preferred language

The following are a selection of the comments received.

#### **Impact due to age and disability comments:**

*“As I’m getting older myself it’s quite scary to think that the elderly and disabled in our community will be just brushed aside with for some no human contact I understand the cost of such a service but what about the cost to service users it’s not just money it’s the wellbeing, the human contact, if only for that short few minutes a day”*

*“As the daughter I'd be expected to visit mam more often to sort out food. Getting older myself and having my own disabilities as well as caring responsibilities for my husband this would put a lot of extra pressure on me. I cannot afford to give up my own job and neither could my brother with whom I share the care of our mother.”*

*“Any decisions under this consultation would impact Elderly and the disabled..”*

*“Disabilities. any increase cost will impact greatly on me as it is costly just to be disabled, as I need to pay to help to clean home and need to pay for walking apparatus.”*

*“My husband and I are severely disabled and these meals provide a life line for us both. Please do not pull this service.”*

*“... I am aged 90+ and I have mobility issues”*

*“Age - older people are less able to pay more for the service due to their fixed income”*

- 4.27 With regards to the proposals, and the impact it may have, respondents were asked how they could impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language (Positive, Negative or Neutral) and if, in any way, it treats the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language? How neutral effects could become positive, how positive effects could be increased, or negative effects be decreased?

**The comments received for the above 2 question have been made available to officers for the development of the associated impact assessments.**

## **5 Letter and Email Responses**

5.1 The following section outlines a summary of the comments from emails received.

5.2 A total of 6 emails were received and a number of calls to the contact centre regarding the consultation, summaries of which are shown below.

- The verbal feedback from the clients is that they do not want frozen meals, they want freshly cooked, homemade type of food, made with passion. They only have the frozen meals on the weekend because they feel they have no other option.
  - Cut the outrageous number of lower managements, and more senior management to a more proportionate level.
  - I believe that it is unfair to increase the price of the hot meal provided, in this time of austerity. It could force the most vulnerable to cancel the service. I am really against it and would prefer the service runs as it has been (if not more efficiently).
  - Meals on Wheels service. wanted to discuss how it would be a shame if it was discontinued, has objections to frozen meals, fully understand the prices. suggests that the desert could be scrapped to save.
-

## **Appendix 2: Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

6 January 2023

**Cabinet – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023**

**Re: Consultation response of Review of Community Meals Service**

I have been instructed by this Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee to convey the comments and observations of Members in relation to the **Review of the Community Meals Service**

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee gave feedback and comments on the preferred service change proposal in respect of the Community Meals Service at its meeting on the 14 December 2022. The following points were raised:

- A majority of committee Members were supportive of Option 3 (*to reorganise the existing internal service and provide a hot/frozen Community Meal home delivery service with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal*) in general but did express concern at the reduction in staff members and asked that this does not affect the time that is spent with the service user when delivering meals. Members commented that a number of service users did not just utilise this as a delivery service, but it was also used as a wellbeing check with the delivery of the meal being the only contact that a service user may have had that day. Members commented that additional time spent with the service user may serve as a good investment as staff may be able to recognise when the service user may need to be referred to another service for additional support, and in turn currently reduces pressure on other Council services.
- Members requested that should this proposal be implemented, Officers should engage with the service users in advance of any changes, particularly in relation to the increase in cost and consideration should be given to where some service users may struggle to meet any potential increase. Committee noted that implementation of this proposal should include engagement and signposting of service users to any support that may be available to enable them to continue with the service, particularly as stated above, that some service users rely on this service for more than the delivery of a meal.
- Members emphasised the importance of maintaining the quality of the meals being delivered and were reassured to hear that they will continue to be developed by a dietician to ensure they are healthy and nutritious and that a number of tests are carried out to ensure they are delivered safely and comply with food safety standards.

- Members asked for data to be monitored during any potential adaptations. They also requested that Exit Surveys are undertaken if service users terminate using the service so this could be analysed, and improvements made where necessary.
- Members were pleased that the options had been developed in consultation with staff members. The Committee requested that as many service users as possible are reached during the consultation period and beyond as their input and feedback is imperative as the proposals will directly impact them.
- Members stated that meals should continue to be delivered in recyclable containers to ensure the Council are contributing to the Welsh Government's Zero Waste target by 2050.

At the conclusion of the Committee's discussions in respect of these proposals, Members noted a wish to scrutinise the delivery of any changes to this service over the short to medium term.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christian Hanagan', written over a faint circular stamp.

**Christian Hanagan**

**Service Director Democratic Services and Communication**

## **Appendix 3: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Frequently Asked Questions – Community Meals (Meals on Wheels) Proposals**

#### **Why is the Council making these changes?**

The Council is facing significant financial challenges and is considering the remodelling of several service change proposals to contribute to the shortfall in funding.

#### **What are the proposals for Community Meals Service?**

There are four proposals being considered: –

**Option 1:** to continue the service as it currently operates with increased service user charges.

**Option 2:** to reorganise the existing internal service with increased service user charges

**Option 3:** (Preferred Option for Consultation): to reorganise the existing internal service and provide a hot/frozen Community Meal home delivery service with increased service user charges

**Option 4:** to cease the current service and support service users to find alternative options.

#### **Will my meal still be cooked for me and delivered to my house?**

Prepared meals will be delivered to the Council's Community Meals Kitchen by an external supplier. The meals will be heated in the Council's Community Meals Kitchen and delivered hot, to your home, Monday to Friday between 11.30am and 2.00pm.

#### **Will my meal still be delivered by the same delivery driver?**

Meals will still be delivered by Community Meals drivers, but it may not be the same delivery person.

#### **What will happen on Saturday and Sunday?**

Your weekend meals will stay the same. A frozen meal and dessert will be delivered to you on a Friday, ready for the weekend.

**Can I have a frozen meal delivered in the week so I can heat it myself?**

Yes, the frozen meal delivery service offers the flexibility so that you can heat it when it suits you rather than being restricted to a hot meal delivery time.

**How much will I have to pay for my meal under the new proposal?**

The current cost of a hot meal and dessert is £4.05. The proposal includes a 50 pence price increase. The new cost for a hot meal and dessert will be £4.55. The cost of a frozen meal and dessert would also be £4.55.

**Will I order my meals the same way?**

There will be no change to how you contact us and order your meals. You can either telephone the Community Meals Office on 01443 281140, Monday to Friday, speak to your Community Meals delivery person or email us on [MealsonWheels@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:MealsonWheels@rctcbc.gov.uk).

**Will I still be able to have a special therapeutic diet?**

Yes, we can cater for a range of textured meals and special diets. Telephone the Community Meals Office or speak to your Community Meals delivery person for more information.

**How will I pay for my meal?**

We will continue to send you a monthly invoice, which you can pay over the telephone, online, BACS transfer, cheque or by cash or debit/credit card at your nearest One4All Centre/Post Office/Barclays Bank.

**What happens next?**

Following the public consultation, a report will be presented to the Council's Cabinet summarising the results and feedback.