

CABINET – 4 JULY 2005 HEALTH AND SOCIAL INCLUSION PORTFOLIO








EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – MEALS ON WHEELS IN COUNCIL OWNED SHELTERED HOUSING ACCOMMODATION

Summary of Purpose and Recommendations:

This report advises of the current costs of providing a meal service to 3 sheltered schemes and Gore Grange Day Centre and recommends ceasing these services.

Cost to Council: £NIL (savings of £38,500 possible) **Within existing budget?** Yes/No

Contribution to Corporate Plan (Minor/Moderate/Major/Neutral):

	+		-		+		-
		Neutral		Priorities			
	Minor			Clean Streets and Public Spaces		Neutral	
		Neutral		Crime and Disorder		Neutral	
	Minor			Housing	Minor		
		Neutral		Managing our Finances	Minor		

Comments on Impacts on Corporate Objectives and Priorities:

The cessation of meals at the sites mentioned in the report will impact upon older people in receipt of meals both in terms of social inclusion and in terms of meeting the needs of older people in the District. However, this must be weighed against the cost of the current provision and whether the needs can be met in some other way.



Organisation of excellence



Working with public and partners



Economic well being



Social well being



Environmental well being

MEALS ON WHEELS IN COUNCIL OWNED SHELTERED HOUSING SCHEMES

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A review of the Meals on Wheels and Community Meals Service has been taking place in conjunction with Hampshire County Council. Historically, the Service has been funded 50/50 between the Hampshire Districts and the County.
- 1.2 As part of the review, to ensure that value for money is being obtained with this important service, reports were presented to the Housing Health and Social Inclusion Panel in March and June, updating members on the progress with the review.
- 1.3 The March report suggested that the review panel should discuss the implications of ceasing Sheltered Housing residents' meals, considering the costs and inequalities outlined in the report.
- 1.4 The Review Panel considered the matter and agreed that it was important to ensure an equitable service; they noted that anyone defined by Social Services as having the required eligibility criteria would receive a meal regardless and therefore there was not a great urgency for a decision. They were also concerned about the loss of social interaction if meals ceased and therefore residents would not necessarily then meet in the lounge to have their midday meal. They considered that the users of the service should be asked for their views before a final decision was taken. The report to review panel in June covers the results of this consultation.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Meals on Wheels in the New Forest are produced in three kitchens that are located within Council owned sheltered housing schemes. As a result, historically the residents at these three schemes (Clarks Close, Gore Grange and Winfrid House) have received a subsidised hot lunchtime meal. This has become custom and practice.
- 2.2 The residents meals in the three sheltered schemes consist of multi portion regenerated frozen entrees with vegetables, bread roll and orange juice, and are more expensive to produce and serve than standard Meals on Wheels. The system is also inequitable as only those residents who live in the three schemes are in receipt of these subsidised meals whether or not they satisfy the standard eligibility criteria that other residents have to comply with to receive a Meal on Wheel. It is therefore clear that the residents in the three schemes receive an increased service to those residents in other Council owned sheltered housing schemes.

- 2.3 As part of the Meals on Wheels review, costs of providing meals have been investigated. Indicative costs based upon the current number of meals provided are as follows:-

	Number of meals per annum	Unit cost £	Income £
Meals on wheels	51,854	4.17	140,000
Clarks Close	2,861	5.81	7,725
Gore Grange	2,542	7.13	6,860
Winfrid House	3,071	6.10	8,290

The costs shown above have changed from those presented to Review Panel in March due to a more detailed analysis taking place, including the separation of and detailed costings for the additional meals provided to Gore Grange Day Centre and other organisations from the sheltered housing scheme kitchens. A spreadsheet showing a breakdown of the budget is attached at Appendix 1. NB the costs of purchasing the food is shown as code S122-Cafeteria Purchases.

- 2.4 It is also evident from the figures contained in the spreadsheet that the cost of providing meals for the Gore Grange Day Centre that is administered by Age Concern is approximately £16,000. Income is around £8,000 leaving a net cost of approximately £8,000 that is currently funded by NFDC. This is effectively a subsidy that the Council are providing to Age Concern.
- 2.5 The total cost to NFDC of Meals on Wheels and sheltered housing catering is currently £73,000 per annum.
- 2.6 It is clear that the needs of the sheltered housing scheme residents are changing and that it may be too prescriptive to offer a meal at a fixed time at lunchtime. The number of residents requiring a meal is falling, year on year. An option might be to offer residents who do not qualify for a standard Meal on Wheel (in accordance with Social Services criteria) a meal at the actual cost rather than at the subsidised cost. At current costs this would be £4.17. This service could also be offered to the clients of Gore Grange Day Centre.
- 2.7 Whilst the social aspect of some tenants having meals in the communal dining room at the three sheltered housing schemes will be lost if meal provision ceases it is worth noting that as part of their normal duties the sheltered housing managers do arrange a number of functions for sheltered housing residents which encourage group activities and these will continue. In addition if a resident is noted as needing additional care or support due to their frailty or illness the sheltered housing manager would make contact with the appropriate persons in Social Services to ensure that assistance and support was provided. It must, however, be remembered that residents in sheltered schemes live independently in their own accommodation and cannot be forced to attend social functions or indeed receive additional support and help if they elect not to have it.

3 CONSULTATION WITH RESIDENTS

- 3.1 As mentioned above three sheltered housing schemes are in receipt of an enhanced service as a result of the Meals on Wheels kitchens being located in those three schemes. The review has identified that these meals are being provided at higher cost than the "normal" meals on wheels service.

- 3.2 All residents at the three schemes concerned, Gore Grange, Winfrid House and Clarks Close were sent a questionnaire asking for their views of the service provided. A copy of the questions and the responses received is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.3 There were 61 replies from an issue of 88, a 69% response rate, the indicative percentages shown below are percentages of the total number of tenants surveyed. Approximately 31 tenants (35%) had a meal at lunchtime, served in the dining room and of these 75% had either a daily meal or a meal 2 or 3 times per week. There were high satisfaction ratings (excellent or good) for the standard of service (87%) and value for money (77%). Food quality was rated as good by 68% of respondents.
- 3.4 Those tenants who chose not to have a lunchtime meal served in the dining room had a variety of reasons for not doing so. Almost ½ (13 tenants) preferred to have a light snack at lunchtime, while 7 tenants preferred to eat elsewhere and 7 tenants said the time did not suit. A minority (3 respondents) thought the meal too expensive. The majority of tenants who do not have the main meal provided at lunchtime, cook their own meal at lunchtime or tea time.
- 3.5 When asked their opinion about replacing the current service with a meals on wheels type service, 31 tenants replied. 23 tenants (26%) were against this change. 4 tenants were unsure and 3 tenants thought this change would be acceptable.
- 3.6 On the topic of the social aspect of communal dining, approximately half of the respondents felt this was very important or important (31 tenants). A further 10 thought it less or not important and 15 did not reply.
- 3.7 None of the tenants completing the questionnaire receive a delivered meal so the proposed replacement service would be a new experience for them. There was a mix of general comments, with most indicating the positive aspects the catering service provides e.g. the practical support it gives and the satisfaction with the service provided by the Council's staff.
- 3.8 The overall result of the consultation exercise has, not surprisingly, indicated that most residents in receipt of the current meal provision would not like to see it withdrawn. However, most would be able to make appropriate alternative arrangements to ensure that they received a meal at lunchtime.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial implications of stopping the provision of meals on wheels to the residents of Clarks Close, Gore Grange and Winfrid House are a potential saving of £30,500 (existing costs less income). A further saving of £8,000 would be achieved if the current service of providing meals to Gore Grange Day Centre were to cease. A proportion of this overall saving (up to a maximum of 25% i.e. £9,625) could potentially be reflected in a reduction in the contribution from HCC to the net deficit, although at this stage, due to the complexities of the recharging formulas, it is not possible to provide an actual figure. This in turn could reduce the saving to NFDC by the same amount.
- 4.2 Should meals to the three sheltered schemes and Gore Grange Day Centre be discontinued then it would be necessary to deal with the redundancy of two employees, however, two employees will reach retirement age by 21 September 2005 so it is hoped that this can be dealt with by natural wastage.

- 4.3 The figures in 2.3 are based upon the actual numbers of meals provided in 2004/2005. The implications of an increase in the number of meals provided in 2005/2006 would result in a reduction in the unit costs of each meal and conversely a reduction in the number of meals provided would result in an increase in the unit cost.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7 EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS

- 7.1 Although the provision of these meals is expensive, we provide a quality meal and this is an important service to those who receive it many of whom are in vulnerable.

We would oppose any compulsory redundancies.

We note the comment about equality issues but we would support the inclusion of those who are excluded into the service rather than excluding everyone by stopping the service.

In our opinion the Council has got something right we provide a high quality service to vulnerable elderly residents, but now we want to stop it. We believe that stopping the service would result in bad publicity and would harm the Councils reputation. The Council could be seen as penny pinching and mean spirited by removing an important service from vulnerable people who are not able to defend themselves.

We understand that a lot of money has been spent on these kitchens. Closing them now could be seen as a waste of money and we would ask that the offering meals to other clients be investigated. If we can find more clients this may lead to economies of sale which could bring down the cost of the meals.

8 PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS

- 8.1 The Portfolio Holder for Health and Social Inclusion recognises that a thorough review of the Meals on Wheels service has been carried out and that this has identified the area of inequality with the provision of meals to three sheltered schemes when tenants of other sheltered housing schemes do not receive the same benefits. In addition the costs of the provision when compared to the cost of a "normal" Meal on Wheel gives rise to concern and whether this can be sustained.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:-

- 9.1 The Council cease the provision of meals to residents of Clarks Close, Gore Grange and Winfrid House in the way that they are currently provided with effect from 1 November 2005. However, in order to achieve equality, all residents of the Council's sheltered housing schemes be offered the opportunity to purchase a Meal on Wheel at full cost if they are not entitled to receive one under existing Social Services criteria.
- 9.2 The Council cease the provision of meals to Gore Grange Day Centre in the way they are currently provided with effect from 1 November 2005, unless Age Concern are willing to pay the additional subsidy of £2.77 per meal, and offer a meal on wheel at full cost if they are not entitled to receive a subsidised meal under existing Social Services criteria.

For further information please contact: **Background Papers:**

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Reports to the Housing Health and Social
Inclusion Panel in March and June 2005.

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April 04 to Feb 05 VARIATION TO DATE	2003-04 Apr - Feb	2004-05 Apr - Feb	Diff
Welfare	17,103	17,627	524
Luncheon Clubs	6,565	5,866	-699
Clarks Close Multi Portions	1,721	2,327	606
Clarks Close MoW	9,864	8,643	-1,221
Gore Grange Multi Portions	2,730	2,368	-362
Gore Grange MoW	9,836	9,567	-269
Winfrid House Multi Portions	2,836	2,815	-21
Winfrid House MoW	7,699	8,460	761
Total	58,354	57,673	-681

Estimated 04/05	Welf. KA101	Clarks KA102	Gore G KA103	Winfrid KA104	TOTAL
Meals On Wheels	19,229	9,429	10,437	9,229	48,324
Multi Portions		2,539	2,583	3,071	8,193
Gore Grange Day Centre			2,869		2,869
Luncheon Clubs	3,530				3,530
DCC Meals		4,190			4,190
West Challenge		2,146			2,146
Brayside		549			549
TOTAL	22,759	18,853	15,889	12,300	69,801

Meals On Wheels Supplied	48,324				48,324
Multi Portion Meals Supplied		2,539	2,583	3,071	8,193
Day Centre Meals Supplied			2,869		2,869
Luncheon Club Meals Suppld	3,530				3,530
TOTAL					62,916

% Of MoW & Multi Portions	82.42	4.04	8.67	4.88
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SHELTERED HOUSING TENANTS CATERING SURVEY 2005

RESULTS

61 respondents

Question 2 - Sheltered Housing Scheme name

Base	61	
	No reply	2
	Winfred House	19
	Alexander Close	1
	Clarks Close	14
	RVC	1
	Gore Grange	24

Question 3 - Do you have a meal at lunchtime in the dining room?

Base	61	
Missing	No reply	1
	Yes	24
	Sometimes (entered after questionnaires completed to accommodate respondents answers)	7
	No	29

Question 4 - If you do not have a meal at lunchtime in the dining room what is the main reason?

	Base	No reply	Yes	No
The quality of the meal is not good enough	29	19	1	9
The meal is too expensive	29	17	3	9
I prefer to eat elsewhere	29	15	7	7
I do not enjoy the company of some of my fellow diners	29	16	5	8
The time does not suit me	29	13	7	9
I prefer to eat a light snack at lunchtime	29	9	13	7

Comments:

- At the moment I am able to cook my own meals
- Cook my own
- Cook my own meals
- I am at work during day time
- I collect my meals from kitchen
- I cook my own
- I have a meal but collect from kitchen
- I like my meal later in the day

- I like to cook my own and at present time I can do that and enjoy eating cooking and I also always lay my table
- I like to cook my own meals whilst I can
- I prefer to cook my own meals whilst I am able to do so
- Quantity not enough
- Will give it a try one day

Question 5 - If you do not have a meal at lunchtime in the dining room what do you usually do for your main meal of the day?

	Base	No reply	Yes	No
Make your own meal at lunchtime	29	11	15	3
Have a snack at lunchtime and a more substantial meal at tea-time	29	14	11	4
Eat out	29	16	4	9
Have a hot Meals on Wheels meal delivered	29	17	-	12
Have a frozen meal that is delivered	29	17	1	11

Comments:

- Have diabetic meals
- I cook my own meal at about 6.30pm
- I eat when I am hungry. Prefer main meal in evening
- Meal is provided from kitchen as I am partially sighted and immobile

Question 6 – How often do you have a meal at lunchtime in the dining room?

Base	31
No reply	2
Daily	19
2-3 times per week	4
Once a week	2
2-3 times a month	-
Other	3
Never	1

Question 7 - How would you rate the meal and service you receive?

	Base	No reply	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
Quality of food	31	5	11	10	3	2	-
Value for money	31	2	17	7	4	1	-
Standard of service	31	3	17	10	1	-	-

Question 8 - Have you used the service in the past but have now stopped using it?

Base	29
No reply	5
Yes	8
No	16

Question 9 - If the current lunchtime service was replaced by a meals on wheels type service (ie hot individual meals in a foil container) how would this affect you?

- At the moment not required
- Daily
- Fine idea
- I don't like meals on wheels as there's no choices to be had
- I have never tried them
- I would miss meeting my friends in the dining room and would rather have my meals delivered from the kitchen
- i would miss the company of other people, and not want to eat so often. Also meals in foil containers do not look as appetizing
- I would miss the social side, but would have to accepts
- I would not have them
- I would not prefer this
- I wouldn't have it
- I wouldn't like it
- It would not - but prefer it to remain as it is
- Might as well eat in dining room as all meals come from foil container
- No
- No
- No choices
- Not at all
- Ok
- ok
- Prefer meal as now
- This would not suit me at all
- Very much so
- We prefer to cook our own
- Would never use it
- Would not like
- Would not mind
- Would not suit me at all
- would stop for good
- Wouldn't like it

Question 10 - How do you rate the social aspect of dining with fellow tenants at lunchtimes?

Base	61	
	No reply	15
	Very important	15
	Important	16
	Neither	4
	Not important	6
	Not at all important	5

Comments: (Important)

- good meals
- I enjoy the company of the lady tenants (I am male)
- I love to meet people
- I would miss the social side but would have to accept

- Nice to be able to chat with my friends
- Nice to have company
- Sometimes I would prefer to change my place at the table

Comments: (Neither)

No comments

Comments: (Unimportant)

- I do not use the service
- Sometimes its good to have company

Question 11 – Do you use any other delivered meals service? If yes which one?

- Tinned meals

Question 12 – General comments

- At the moment I can manage but will try it at some time
- Good to have someone to talk to
- Having meals with other tenants is good socially plus I am not able to do my own cooking, my family are sure I am getting a good meal once a day
- I am very happy here but I keep myself to myself
- I can no longer cook myself so have to rely on meals from kitchen from our excellent cook
- I cannot eat all the meal due to hernia so sometimes have what suits me
- I cook my own meals
- I cook myself and have what I want and how much I want
- I enjoy all my meals
- I find the staff and tenants of the house very pleasant and sociable. Please keep our kitchen meals for us.
- I think this is an excellent facility and I would very much miss it if it is stopped
- If I have a visitor I notify someone, so as to not let them cook the usual meal for me
- It's good i can have visitors to lunch
- Joanna very good to bring my lunch up when I'm not well
- Kitchen staff friendly and helpful
- Meals should be freshly cooked everyday at least one alternative should be offered
- Please leave as it is
- satisfied
- The kitchen delivers me a frozen diabetic meal 3 times a week, I heat when ready
- The meal provided gives a good balanced diet. When you are on your own you don't bother to cook a full meal. The social side would be sadly missed.
- To years I have not use the dining room as there was trouble with seating arguments
- Used to go into dining room but there was always arguments as to where you could sit as to where you could sit as now collected my meal from kitchen. Have been collecting for 2-3 years
- Very good
- Very good - could do with them at weekends
- We have always chosen our menu and cooked it ourselves. If we went out shopping we would not have to rush back for lunch
- When we moved from Churchill Court in February we used the meal service for 3 weeks and were most grateful for it. The service was excellent but at the moment I

am cooking myself. I will do so for as long as I'm able. There will probably be a time in the not too distant future when we shall require the meals service. When that time comes - we should like to see more fresh vegetables ie greens, cauliflower etc incorporated in the meal - even if it costs a bit more. It is important the meals are served hot a you were kind enough to serve them in our flat, which we prefer - due to mobility, between 12 - 12.30 is an ideal time.