

## MEALS ON WHEELS AND COMMUNITY MEALS REVIEW

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the conclusion of the meals on wheels and community meals review
- 1.2 Progress on the review has been regularly reported to the Housing, Health & Social Inclusion Panel since its commencement in December 2003. It has taken a prolonged period of time to conclude this review due to the partnerships with Hampshire County Council, Social Services and the Women's Royal Voluntary Service.
- 1.3 The review has involved research with other Local Authorities and negotiation with other service providers but the results have identified both cashable and non-cashable efficiency savings and an opportunity to invest in the service in order to produce a higher level of provision to residents of New Forest District.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Hampshire County Council have a statutory duty to ensure the provision of a meal to each person who meets the eligibility criteria under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. All Hampshire Districts part fund the provision using powers contained in the Health & Social Services and Social Security Adjudications Act 1983, Section 29, Schedule 9 Part II, although there is no statutory duty for them to do so. This is a local arrangement and, in other Counties, Social services fund 100% of the provision.
- 2.2 New Forest District Councils involvement in the Meals on Wheels service is unique in Hampshire, as this Council is operationally responsible and carries out the administrative function relating to the provision of Meals on Wheels in the District.
- 2.3 It is understood that an agreement was drawn up between Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Districts prior to the 1974 Local Government reorganisation, stating that the net deficit of the Meals on Wheels Service would be funded 50% by the County and 50% by the Districts.

### 3. RESULTS

- 3.1 The review has focussed on the main areas agreed by the review panel. The results are shown under these headings.
- 3.2 i) Review of Recipients of the Service to ensure they meet the Social Services Eligibility Criteria

This review was undertaken by Hampshire Social Services and has resulted in greater equity throughout the District. It has been a cost neutral exercise as those who were found not to be eligible were replaced by others who were eligible.

3.3 ii) Check the Availability of Hot Meals 5 days per week, establishing which measures are in place for the other 2 days

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A survey of all recipients revealed that they were very satisfied with the current level of service and that they had other means of obtaining a hot meal at times when these were not provided by the Meals on Wheels Service. The provision of frozen meals is now available, for re-heating, to supplement the service. However, the Government Green Paper, Independence, Well-being and Choice which deals with the future direction for adult social care envisages better and more accessible levels of meal services than are currently provided in the District. For example there may be a requirement for a 7 day service if required. The District's current service provision is attached at Appendix 1.

Officers will investigate the feasibility of providing a 7 day service when the future provision of the service has been agreed by Members, however, it should be noted that the likely financial implications could be in the region of £15,000 pa for NFDC if a hot meal provision is required whereas a frozen meal provision will be cost neutral.

3.4 iii) Rationalise the allocation of grant funding and the operation of luncheon clubs in the District

A survey of luncheon clubs was undertaken as part of this review. 12 replies were received from the 15 luncheon clubs known to operate in the District. Most clubs operated just one day per week with one operating on 3 days. The average attendance is 30 people who attend 42 weeks per year. Seven clubs cooked hot food on site, the remaining 5 had hot food supplied by an external kitchen. A mixture of volunteers and paid cooks provided the food cooked on site. Prices charged ranged from £2.15 to £3.00. 5 clubs received no funding, 5 received funding from NFDC and 3 from HCC.

The total amount of funding to luncheon clubs is approximately £11,000 per year with Age Concern receiving £7,000 of this sum. Luncheon Club funding varies and can be in the form of a grant, payment of rent for premises, subsidy of transport costs or subsidy of meals provided.

Officers will work toward changing the current funding process by introducing a form on which the luncheon club organiser will apply for a grant, this will rationalise the funding and will ensure equity. Grant application will be considered in January each year for funding required in the subsequent financial year. Detailed criteria will be developed against which each application will be considered together with a request for the production of the club's annual accounts. It is hoped that lessons can be learned from those clubs operating without Council funding which can be shared in order to improve efficiency. It is proposed to introduce this process for the 2007/08 financial year.

3.5 iv) Investigate future options for the delivery and administration of meals on wheels in the District

Following a comprehensive market testing exercise with The Women's Royal Voluntary Service and Appetito, our current meal suppliers, it was concluded that the existing arrangements in place in The New Forest were the most cost effective. However, further investigations into meal production have taken place and negotiations entered into with HC3S, the Catering business of Hampshire County Council.

HC3S are able to supply meals from one Social Services kitchen in the District, at Calmore. This kitchen would service all the meal rounds in the District and they also have the capacity to provide multi-portion meals to Day Centres/Luncheon clubs if required.

As HC3S already have cooks employed in this building, economies of scale can be realised by the provision of cover for absence, resulting in a reduction of the unit cost of a meal whilst still maintaining the same quality and service. The possibility of HC3S providing a multi-portion service to the sheltered housing residents is also being explored but some difficulties have been encountered as there is no one on site to serve the meals or to clear away and wash up after the meal has been consumed. The WRVS will be approached to ascertain whether they may be able to assist in this service. The full proposal from HC3S is attached at Appendix 2 (which is in private session). Mileage and travelling times from Calmore are attached at Appendix 3.

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Members will note that there are one-off set up costs required in order to facilitate the use of the kitchen, these costs could be met from the existing Meals on Wheels and Community Meals equipment and tools budget for 2005/06.

As negotiations are continuing at the time of writing this report, Cabinet will be updated of the current situation verbally at the meeting.

3.6 v) Investigate more cost effective ways to provide meals to residents in the 3 Sheltered Housing Schemes.

Costs of providing meals at the 3 sheltered housing schemes producing meals on wheels were investigated as part of the review. Indicative costs based on the current number of meals provided are as follows:

	<b>Number of Meals per Annum</b>	<b>Unit Cost £</b>
Meals on Wheels	51,854	4.17
Clarks Close	2,861	5.81
Gore Grange	2,542	7.13
Winfrid House	3,071	6.10

It was evident from the figures that the provision of meals to sheltered housing tenants was less cost effective than the provision of a meal on wheel. A report was discussed at Cabinet in July 2005, where it was agreed that the current method of service would cease with effect from 1 November 2005. However, this date has been extended to 31 December 2005 to coincide with the notice date for employees.

It was clear that the needs of the sheltered housing scheme tenants were changing and that the number of residents requiring a meal was falling. Many residents do not qualify, under the social services eligibility criteria, for a subsidised meal and their receipt of a subsidised meal has evolved due to the kitchens in the 3 sheltered housing schemes being used to produce meals on wheels. The residents will be re-assessed by Social Services to ensure that those meeting the social services criteria will receive a meal on wheel, those who do not qualify will be offered a meal on wheel at cost price i.e. approximately £3.85. Sheltered Housing Managers will encourage residents to eat their midday meals together in the scheme dining rooms to retain the important social interaction.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The Meals on Wheels and Community Meals Service has been comprehensively reviewed resulting in the cessation of the existing sheltered housing resident's meals and the opportunity to outsource the meals on wheels service. Luncheon club funding will also be rationalised and recipients of Meals on Wheels have been re-assessed to confirm eligibility by Social Services. Although an enhanced meals on wheels service has not been specifically requested by recipients, it may be possible for a meal to be provided seven days per week if required.

#### **5. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS**

- 5.1 The Portfolio Holder for Health and Social Inclusion fully supports the conclusions of the review as this will result in far more equity for residents of the District. Furthermore, she recommends that the Meals on Wheels provision is outsourced to improve the efficiency of the Service provided that satisfactory terms are agreed with the potential contractor.

#### **6. HOUSING, HEALTH & SOCIAL INCLUSION REVIEW PANEL COMMENTS**

- 6.1 The Housing, Health and Social Inclusion Review Panel at their meeting on 16 November 2005 considered this report and noted the results of the Meals on Wheels and Community Meals Review. They particularly expressed their appreciation of the thorough way in which the review had been conducted.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The current financial implications of the review are savings to the Council of £30,000 from ceasing to provide resident's meals. Potentially, further savings from outsourcing the meals on wheels service could be achieved. Detailed financial implications are attached at Appendix 4 (which is in private session). The potential cost of providing a 7 day hot meal service could be in the region of £15,000 p.a., however, this would be the responsibility of Hampshire County Council.

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no major environmental implications arising from this review.

## **9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this review.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agree the outsourcing of the provision of Meals on Wheels for the District to HC3S with effect from 1 January 2006.

### **For further information contact:**

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### **Background Papers:**

## MEALS ON WHEELS DETAILS - MARCH 2005

AREA	No. of meals supplied pa	DAYS DELIVERED
<b>Brockenhurst</b>	380	Tuesday & Friday
<b>Fordingbridge</b>	5,830	Monday to Friday
<b>Barton / Milford / Hordle</b>	10,660	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday , Friday
<b>Hythe</b>	3,290	Monday, Tuesday, Friday
<b>Lymington / Sway / Boldre</b>	6,030	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
<b>Lyndhurst</b>	3,420	Monday to Friday
<b>Totton</b>	8,600	Monday, Tuesday Wednesday, Friday
<b>Ringwood</b>	10,780	Monday to Friday
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48,990</b>	

### APPENDIX 3

#### Mileage and travelling times (According to AA Route Planner)

	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Minutes</b>
Calmore to Brockenhurst	11.5	22
Calmore to Hythe	9.7	20
Calmore to Hordle	17.2	39
Calmore to Milford on Sea	19.6	39
Calmore to Barton on Sea	21.0	46
Calmore to Lyndhurst	7.7	15
Calmore to Ringwood	15.8	19
Calmore to Fordingbridge	21.4	26