

Note to

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

9 February 2011

Note of

Director of Community Services

Wards affected

All

Title

Consultation on promoting independence through home meal provision – Call In

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report responds to the call-in made by Councillors Foster, Noonan and Mrs Dixon. The reason for the call in is: "To better understand exactly what pricing levels service users will be consulted on as a result of this decision".

2 Consideration of the Call-in

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member (Community Services) report dated 18 January 2011 recommended a 12 week consultation period from 21 February 2011 until 15 May 2011, to consult the public on the proposed changes to the future provision of home meals.

3 Background to Cabinet Member Report and response to call in

- 3.1 The City Council has a statutory duty to make arrangements for specific services to support disabled people to remain in their own homes, and the provision of meals whether in the home or elsewhere, is one of these duties.
- 3.2 The current service is provided in house from the Chace kitchen and passenger transport. A review of the service as one strand of the Catering Fundamental Services Review has identified that the current service exhibits the following features:

- Limited choice and control for individuals which do not align with the principles of personalisation – and the service is currently only available for people who are eligible.
 - Inflexible (small menu choice, set delivery times)
 - Issues about quality
 - Significant reduction in take up year on year
 - High cost to Council/low Value for money
- 3.3 The current cost of producing and delivering a meal is £10.32. Existing users contribute £4.23 a meal and the Council subsidises the remainder at a total annual cost of £467k.
- 3.4 Soft market testing has identified that external providers can provide hot delivered meals for between £5 and £6 per meal. Frozen meals can be provided for a lower price of between £3 and £4. It is unlikely that the current in-house service can reduce costs to a level that is comparable with external providers.
- 3.5 There are no proposed changes to existing users in that their contribution of £4.23 will remain the same and they will receive a meal on a like for like basis.
- 3.6 It is proposed that new people accessing home meals will pay the full cost of the delivered meal after new arrangements are in place. It is not proposed that new users will pay £10.32 per meal.
- 3.7 Following the consultation a separate report on options will be presented to Cabinet. This is likely to recommend putting in place new arrangements to externalise the service. This will mean that the full cost new users will pay under the new arrangements will be determined through a procurement process. It is anticipated that the cost to new users will be substantially cheaper than the full cost of the current in-house service and is likely to be in the region of £5 - £6 per meal.

4 Consultation details

- 4.1 Consultation of these types of changes is normally carried out in advance of a formal decision to change policy.
- 4.2 The consultation is planned to last for 12 weeks, starting on 21 February 2011 until 15 May 2011.
- 4.3 The consultation will focus on what is important for current and potential users and citizens in meeting their nutritional needs. Specifically this will cover how services can be improved, potential future models of service provision and costs for home meals.
- 4.4 Existing users will be sent letters and offered a visit to review existing arrangements and respond to the consultation.
- 4.5 Three public meetings are planned to take place on 8 March 12noon-2pm, 10 March 6pm-8pm and 17 March 12noon-2pm. All the meetings will be held in the Lower Hall, Central Methodist Hall. Views will also be sought from voluntary organisations and interest groups from across the city.