

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 15th September 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care

SUBJECT: Community Meals: Re-commissioning Options

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek an Executive Board decision regarding the preferred re-commissioning option for the provision of the Community Meals Service from 1st April 2023.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That Executive Board

- i) Note the contents of the report; and
- ii) Advise of their decision regarding the preferred re-commissioning option for the provision of the Community Meals Service from 1st April 2023.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Council provides a Community Meals Service to eligible adults within Halton who are unable to shop or prepare a meal for themselves due to age, illness or disability. To determine if an individual qualifies for the Community Meals Service, an Adult Social Care worker considers the needs of an individual and the circumstances of any carers. The ongoing need for the meals service is then periodically reviewed.

3.2 An external catering provider (Apetito) currently supplies the Council with frozen, ready prepared meals. The frozen meals are heated by the Council's in-house catering team and are delivered by the Council's fleet management service. Hot meals are provided in service users' own homes, up to seven days per week between the hours of 11am and 1pm. The Council can also provide an optional cold meal tea time pack, which is delivered during the lunchtime delivery period.

3.3 The Community Meals Service is currently a chargeable service that is non means-tested. Service users are billed on a four weekly basis for meals provided during the four-week period.

- 3.4 The table below shows the total number of meals provided by the Council in the last five years and also the average daily number of meals provided.

Year	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Total Meals	36,860	43,032	41,684	48,273	41,618
Daily Average	101	118	115	133	114

During 2020-21 the number of meals increased in line with increased demand due to the pandemic.

- 3.5 The Council's Internal Audit team undertook a planned internal audit of the Community Meals Service for the financial year 2020/2021. Outlined in the Audit report, the Internal Audit Team made a number of recommendations for the service.
- 3.6 One of the recommendations set out that an interim contract should be awarded to the existing supplier whilst the Council considers alternative community meals service delivery options. Subsequently, a one-year contract was agreed with the current supplier Apetito until 31st March 2023.
- 3.7 In the intervening time, Officers have drawn up a number of options (Appendix A) in relation to the supply of the meals from 1st April 2023. Executive Board is asked to consider the options proposed and advise which option is most preferred, in order for the appropriate action to be undertaken.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None at this stage.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows the total expenditure for the service and total income for the financial years 2019/20 and 2020/21. In each year there was a shortfall in income as shown.

	<u>19/20 Full Year Actual</u>	<u>20/21 Full Year Actual</u>
Total Expenditure	£275,132.08	£298,914.40
Total Income	£196,593.18	£229,401.33
Net Expenditure including recharges (i.e. current shortfall)	£78,538.90	£69,513.07

- 5.2 Work is currently being undertaken by the Council's Financial Management Team to calculate appropriate charging levels to be introduced from 1st April 2023 for the financial year 2023 – 2024

onwards, should the service continue. The aim is to remove the need for the Council subsidy and for all service costs/expenditure to be met through income from charging.

- 5.3** The table below is taken from some early modelling work to anticipate the required charge per meal from 1st April 2023 to ensure that the income received is sufficient to remove the Council Subsidy. The table also shows current charges. Further ongoing work will determined the exact charging levels.

Community Meals – individual meals Charges	2022/2023	2023/2024
	Charges	Charges
	£	£
Hot Meal	4.20	5.45
Cold Tea Time Pack	2.95	3.85

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

None identified.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None identified.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The provision of healthy, nutritional meals that cater for all types of diets, including special diets, is a significant contributory factor in maintaining the health and wellbeing of local residents.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Delivery of the meals via the Council’s Transportation service allows for additional welfare checks to be made to check on customers and to act if something unusual were to occur, e.g. non-contact by the customer at their home address.

6.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1** A decision taken by Executive Board as regards the most preferred option will ensure appropriate action is undertaken prior to the cessation of the current contract on 31st March 2023.

8.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Community Meals service is a non-means tested and inclusive service which is open to all residents of Halton, provided that they meet the eligibility criteria of the service as determined via assessment undertaken by Adult Social Care.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Internal Audit Report – Community Meals	Runcorn Town Hall	Amanda Lewis, Commissioning & Development Manager