

# **ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **Agenda Item 7**

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Briefing Note on Community Meals</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>28 June 2011</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Lead Commissioner, Adult Social Care and Health</b>		
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All		

### **FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

#### **1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 This report provides the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview and Scrutiny committee with a briefing note on Community Meals. The briefing outlines the current arrangements for the provision of Community Meals in the city and identifies some of the key issues for this service.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That members:  
Note the briefing report and consider the issues raised.

#### **3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) is the current provider for the Community Meals contract in Brighton and Hove. This contract is due to expire in March 2012.
- 3.2 The WRVS supplies hot meals to people who have been assessed as needing them, and delivers the meals to their own homes, thereby

assisting people to remain living independently. Service users or their carers can also self refer directly to WRVS.

- 3.3 The service operates 365 days per year and there is a requirement that a "safe and well" check is made for each person who has a meal delivered.
- 3.4 The WRVS are responsible for ensuring that meal weights and nutritional content comply with the latest Recommended Standard for Community Meals developed by the National Association of Care Caterers (NACC). Currently the WRVS contract with Tillery Valley for the supply of the meals.
- 3.5 Since October 2009 the WRVS have been leasing 4 Hot Vans to deliver meals in the BN1 and BN2 districts of the city. Volunteers using private cars with insulated thermo-boxes deliver in other areas of the city.

#### **4 COST AND VALUE**

- 4.1 The value of the contract is a combination of a fixed and variable price. The rate charged for the variable element decreases on a sliding scale as the number of meals that have been provided increases.

For the year 2010-11:

- the fixed element was £357,700
- the variable cost was £125,251 (£1.53 per meal x 81,864 meals)
- total cost £482,951
- less client contribution: £239,460
- Cost to the Council £ 243,491
- The unit cost for each meal provided is £5.89 less client contribution £2.90 =£2.99

- 4.2 The WRVS collect the client contribution on behalf of the Council, this is deducted from the amount charged to the Council.

The Client contribution increased from £2.90 per meal to £3.00 in January 2011. Service users are not financially assessed so the benefit of this price is available to everyone who has been assessed as benefitting from the service.

To our knowledge the charge of £3 per meal is the cheapest in the country and offers excellent value for money.

The total client contribution for the period 2010-2011 was £239,460

- 4.3 The number of meals provided has been reducing in recent years as demonstrated in the table below.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Meals provided</b>	<b>% reduction against previous year</b>
Apr2007 to March 2008	96352	
Apr 2008 to March 2009	87231	9%
Apr 2009 to March 2010	83729	4%
Apr 2010 to March 2011	81864	2%

The rate of decline in the number of meals provided has levelled off over the last year. However, since the current contract was awarded in 2007 the number of meals provided has reduced by 15%, a reduction of 14,488 meals per year.

- 4.4 During the year 2010-2011.

The breakdown of community meals customers was as follows:

- 15 kosher customers
- 8 vegetarians
- 36 diabetic customers
- 353 no specific dietary needs

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**412 people in total**

- 4.5 Number of new referrals for the Council was 250 and from self referrals directly to WRVS was 188 making a total of 438 new service users. The number of people who no longer required the service was 549.

## **5. QUALITY OF THE SERVICE**

5.1 The Adult Social Care Commissioning Support Unit monitors and regularly reviews the Community Meals Contract.

5.2 A recent survey (Feb 2011) was undertaken by the Lay Assessors Scheme on behalf of the Council.

51 people completed a telephone interview to give their views on the service.

The headlines from this survey were:

- 84% felt that the service was good value for money
- Over 90% said that the meals were hot enough.
- 88% said the variety was acceptable or better but some people mentioned lack of variety in vegetables.
- 82% thought the quantity was just right
- Almost everyone said presentation was good
- Almost everyone was happy with the people who delivered their meals

5.3 The WRVS also gather feedback from their service users with regular surveys.

Results from their March 2010 survey were similar to those of the Lay Assessor's scheme as detailed in 5.2 above.

The notable differences were that:

- 2.9% of the people surveyed said that the portion size was rarely or never adequate.
- 12% of people said they would use a breakfast service if it was delivered with their lunchtime hot meal the day before
- 22 % of people did not know who to contact if they have a comment or complaint to make.

5.4 The delivery time and temperature of the first and last meal delivered on each round are recorded daily.

## **6. CURRENT ISSUES**

6.1 The number of people receiving Community Meals has dropped considerably and as a consequence the unit cost for the Council has increased. In part this maybe linked to the increased options available to people in relation to ready made meals.

- 6.2 Service user feedback is generally very positive with most people feeling that the service offers good value for money.
- 6.3 The WRVS have to collect the client contribution on behalf of the Council. This has resulted in a number of bad debts. The WRVS send three “reminder” letters before the Council is responsible for continuing to follow up the debts.
- 6.4 The WRVS currently contract with Tillery Valley for the supply of meals; this company is based in Wales.
- 6.5 The contract has not been re-tendered for many years since there have been no other providers in the local area who could provide this service. This situation has now changed.
- 6.6 The Council charge for the service is one of the lowest nationally.
- 6.7 The service is available to those people who may not be eligible for care services through the Council’s eligibility criteria

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Documents in Members’ Rooms:**

None

