



HEALTH SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16TH OCTOBER 2014

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF MEALS DIRECT

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with additional information on the discretionary Meals Direct service, as part of the agreed budget strategy for 2015/2016.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides details of potential increases in charges for provision of Meals Direct, for members to consider prior to report being presented to cabinet.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The budget strategy agreed by Council in February 2014 required estimated savings of £6.5m for the 2015/16 financial year and £6.9m for 2016/17. This estimate has since been revised following advice from the Minister for Local Government that Local Authorities should model scenarios based on a cut in Welsh Government funding of up to 4.5%, rather than the previously notified indicative cut of 1.5%. This has the potential to increase the savings requirement to £15.1m for 2015/16 and £15.0m for 2016/17.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Currently meals are provided to individuals in their own homes following an assessment by Social Services. These meals, which are nutritionally balanced and meet all dietary requirements are prepared and delivered to service users by the Environment Directorate
- 4.2 As of the beginning of June 2014 there were a total of 336 people recorded in the SWIFT data base as being in receipt of meals, of these 85 people only have Meals Direct and no other service. These people may also be supported by family, friends and the third sector. Individuals can have the service on one or more days.
- 4.3 At a previous special scrutiny held on the 17th July 2014 members indicated they only wished to pursue the option of increasing the current charge of £2.60 for provision of Meal Direct and requested further details on this.
- 4.4 If charges are increased, service users may begin to source alternative meal providers, and for some their financial circumstances may not allow them to access a service of this type at all. If meal numbers fall overhead costs per meal will rise impacting upon the financial

sustainability of the service.

- 4.5 The current charge of £2.60 is low when compared to the rest of Wales where prices range from £3.10 to £5.10

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An equalities impact assessment will be completed for the cabinet report as part of MTFP proposals.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Increasing the charge from £2.60 to £3.10, a rise of 50p would generate income of £44K at existing meal numbers.
- 6.2 Increasing the charge from £2.60 to £3.60, a rise of £1.00 would generate income of £88K at existing meal numbers.
- 6.3 Increasing the charge from £2.60 to £4.10, a rise of £1.50 would generate income of £131K at existing meal numbers.
- 6.4 Increasing the charge from £2.60 to £5.10, a rise of £2.50 would generate income of £217K at existing meal numbers.
- 6.5 Increasing the charge from £2.60 to the full cost of providing a meal at £5.40 would generate income of £243K at existing meal numbers.
- 6.6 Any price increase may meet resistance and could mean some existing customers may choose not to continue with this provision which could impact up on the financial viability of the Meals Direct Service as economies of scale are reduced.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct personnel implications in relation to this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 There are no consultation responses that are not reflected in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the proposals to increase the charges as identified in section 6 and indicated their preference.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure that the views of the Scrutiny Committee are considered prior to this matter being referred to Cabinet

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 1972.

Author: Jo Williams, Assistant Director Adults
Consultees: Social Services Senior Management Team
Cllr Robin Woodyatt, Cabinet Member Social Services
Adult Services Divisional Management Team
Mike Jones, Interim Financial Services Manager
Shaun Watkins, Acting HR Manager
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection

Background Papers:
Scrutiny Report Meals Direct 17th July 2014