

## **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE – 12 JULY 2016**

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### **Title:**

## **IN DEPTH REVIEW OF THE WAVERLEY MEALS ON WHEELS SERVICE – FINDINGS REPORT**

**[Portfolio Holders :Cllr Jenny Else and Cllr Andrew Bolton]  
[Wards Affected:All]**

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### **Summary and purpose:**

It was agreed at the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2016 to carry out an in-depth review of the Meal on Wheels Service as a result of the steady decrease in the uptake of meals since 2011.

The purpose of this report is to inform the Executive of the Sub-Committee's findings, taking into account the observations made by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 June and to seek approval of the recommendations for the development of a future Meals Service.

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### **How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:**

The Council funds a number of voluntary organisations that provide high priority services for the benefit of Waverley residents, in partnership with the Council. The Meals on Wheels service is provided through the Royal Voluntary Service and is available to older residents, vulnerable people and people with disabilities through a referral system. The service is funded through an annual Service Level Agreement in partnership with Surrey County Council who match-fund Waverley's financial contribution.

### **Financial Implications:**

The current Waverley Meals on Wheels service is delivered by the Royal Voluntary Service under an annual Service Level Agreement. Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council Adult Social Care directorate both contribute £30,000 towards the overall service delivery, totalling £60,000. Waverley also contributes staff time and premises costs for the service totalling a further £10,000. Funding for the service had remained the same since 2007. Provision was made within the Council's 2016/17 budget to continue funding RVS at the same level. Details of funding for 2016/17 from Surrey County Council's Adult Social Care directorate are detailed in the body of this report.

Future financial implications will be considered in detail following approval of potential operating models by Executive on 12 July. However the expectation is that these will be contained within the Council's contribution of £30,000 per year.

### **Legal Implications:**

Waverley has no statutory obligation to provide a meals on wheels service. Currently there is a Service Level Agreement in place between the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) and the Council. Clause 14 of the Agreement states that either party may terminate the

Agreement upon giving six months' notice in writing to the other or a lesser period if the parties agree in writing. The Council gave six month's formal notice to RVS in accordance with Clause 14, that the current Service Level Agreement will terminate on 30 September 2016 following SCC decision to only allocate funding to 30 June 2016.

In respect of future models, any legal implications will be considered in detail following discussion of potential operating models by Executive 14 July.

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## **Introduction**

1. It was agreed at the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2016 to carry out an in-depth review of the Meal on Wheels Service as a result of the steady decrease in the uptake of meals since 2011. As Surrey County Council Adult Social Care directorate co-fund the service, they have been part of the review process along with the Royal Voluntary Service. This is a discretionary service that has received joint funding from both organisations contributing to the delivery of the service.
2. The decision of this Committee to select the Meals on Wheel service as an area for an in-depth review reflects the importance that Members place on how residents are supported to remain independent in their own home and having access to a community meals service. In light of current funding challenges it has proven to be a timely review focussing on what type of meals service should be supported in the future.
3. The current Waverley Meals on Wheels service is delivered by the Royal Voluntary Service under an annual Service Level Agreement on behalf of Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council Adult Social Care Directorate.
4. In March this year the Council received notification from Surrey County Council's Adult Social Care Directorate regarding the actions it would need to take following the significant financial challenges it is facing as a result of reductions in its government grant. As a result, Surrey confirmed it would only guarantee funding for the Waverley Meals on Wheels Service for the first 6 months only for 2016/17 ie £15,000, whilst reviewing all their grants and contracts across Surrey.
5. The impact of this news was communicated to the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) and given the Council's obligations of their Service Level Agreement, it gave six month's formal notice, in accordance with Clause 14, that the current Service Level Agreement will terminate on 30 September 2016. This meant the review process needed to speed up with a shorter amount of time to outline a new model of delivery or alternative support available to RVS clients by 1 October.
6. To understand the profile of the current users Surrey County Council reviewed them all, to determine if they were already known to Surrey Adult Social Care. Out of the 135 active users:
  - a. 63 are open cases with Surrey Adult Social Care Waverley Locality Team of which 32 were allocated services/support and 31 were awaiting allocation;
  - b. 57 people were known to Surrey Adult Social Care were not open cases with the Waverley locality team, this could be due to not reaching the threshold for services or no longer requiring services; and,
  - c. 15 people were not known to Surrey Adult Social Care Waverley Locality Team.

7. Interrogating the current list of users identified that there was a high proportion of vulnerable individuals accessing the service who may not be in receipt of other services and therefore the RVS volunteer delivering their meal may be their only regular source of social contact.
8. The focus on the current users proved to be a valuable exercise as it confirmed that the visit is as important as the meal and that this is an area that could be developed in the future.

### **Drivers for the review**

9. The review was initiated for 3 main reasons:
  - a. Monitoring information provided by RVS shows that there has been a steady decrease in the take up of the Meals on Wheels service from 40,248 meals delivered in 2011/12 to 29,775 meals delivered in 2014/15. Meals delivered in 2015/16 came to 27,783, a further decrease.
  - b. Consultation from the Ageing Well Strategy highlighted the need to review the service as some residents expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the meals.
  - c. The current Meals on Wheels Service has operated in the same way for some years. Future priorities and how these would be achieved need to be considered to ensure a sustainable meals service that meets the future needs of the community and offers a high quality service, meeting people's wellbeing needs and offers a value for money service.
10. Also, whilst the current service meets all food safety requirements, Councillors have expressed concern about the length of time meals are kept warm as they are transported across the length of the borough and the impact on the quality of the meal.

### **Scope of the review**

11. Is the community meals service currently being delivered in Waverley one which the Council should continue to support?
12. It was proposed that the review of the meals on wheels service focused on addressing the following key points so that recommendations on a future of this service can be made to the Executive:
  - a. What is the most important element of the service?
  - b. What are the alternative models for supporting a community meals service?
  - c. What are the views of the staff, volunteers and customers about the service?
  - d. What financial model would need to be developed to deliver a self-sustaining service?

### **The review process**

13. The timetable for the review is set out below:

19 February 2016	Establishment of O&S Sub-Committee	Agreement of scope of the review
6 April 2016	O&S Sub-Committee meeting	Discussion with Surrey County Council Adult Social Care Directorate
28 April 2016	O&S Sub-Committee meeting	Discussion with RVS on current model and alternative models delivered across the country
10 May 2016	O&S Sub-Committee meeting	Consolidating information from the review and determining future direction
14 June 2016	Community Overview & Scrutiny	Consideration of the Sub-Committee's final report
12 July 2016	Executive	Presentation of report and recommendations

### **Royal Voluntary Service (RVS)**

14. The Sub-Committee met with the Director for the South of England and the Operations Manager for RVS on 28 April as part of the review. RVS are disappointed that they have been given 6 months notice for termination of their Service Level Agreement, however, they understand the financial pressures that Local Authorities are facing and this is not a unique situation to their organisation.
15. RVS discussed the implications of closing the current Meals on Wheels service from 30 September, and asked for more time to identify alternative solutions and to enable to effective communication with the users and volunteers. It was agreed that the Chair of the Sub-Committee, Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Culture and Strategic Director for Operations would meet with the volunteers on Tuesday 7 June at Brightwells Gostrey Centre, Farnham.
16. The Sub-Committee discussed with RVS whether they would be able to provide a fresh food meal service. RVS felt that this was not a viable option for their organisation, however they presented 3 potential models which they deliver across the country as an alternative. These models are:
  - d. A private model – where there is no funding from the Local Authority and all costs are passed on to the user. This would mean that the meal price would increase significantly and RVS have found that this model often struggles to attract new customers.
  - e. A Good Neighbours model – where the volunteer helps the user shop for groceries, plan meals and maintain suitable food provision. With this model the volunteer does not prepare or heat food, which means it is more suited to the more able resident. This model would require grant funding.
  - f. A delivery model – where the meals are cooked and prepared by another organisation and RVS coordinate the delivery of the meals through their volunteers. This model would still require some level of grant funding.
17. It was agreed that RVS would provide business models and costings for these options so they could be considered as part of, or a service option.

## **Findings of the Review**

18. Whilst the number of people accessing the Waverley Meals on Wheels service has been declining since 2011/12, for a number of the 135 residents currently supported it remains a vital lifeline. 66% of clients are over 85 years of age and the service supports them to remain independent at home, safe and well and have social contact. The current service provides a hot meal but also emotional and psychological benefits. Apart from the person regularly delivering their meals, 34% of clients only get a regular visitor once a week or less. Whilst it is generally accepted that this type of service is helpful in maintaining independence and delaying escalation to high or more complex needs, the measurement is difficult to prove. It is also difficult to demonstrate the financial benefits.
19. Whilst the current service model of re-heated frozen meals model meets basic nutritional requirements for this cohort of users it does not travel well to the furthest corners of the borough and a fresh, more locally prepared meal option is preferable for a future service.
20. A locally prepared meals service would be preferable as it could create opportunities to further develop befriending and good neighbour schemes so that Waverley's most vulnerable residents can access wider services beyond just a meal.
21. The current service is supported by approximately 200 registered volunteers. They are highly valued by the Council and clients and provide a good, consistent service. 91 of the volunteers are 70 years of age and older and 26 of the volunteers are 80 years of age and older. These volunteering opportunities enable another cohort of older people to remain independent, feel valued, remain busy and healthy, meet new people and take an active part of their community.

## **Summary of the Sub-Committee's conclusions**

22. The Sub-Committee highlighted that although the Meals on Wheels service was a discretionary service it met many of the corporate priorities of the Council, particularly Community Wellbeing, and therefore they would like to see a fit for purpose, sustainable service offer in Waverley.
23. The Sub-Committee were unanimous that the service was not just about food; for many of the clients it was more the social contact of the visit than the meal. Many of the existing clients are known to receive care already from Adult Social Care, however, a small number were not known to Adult Social Care and the Sub-Committee wanted to ensure that the needs of these clients were being properly assessed and actioned.
24. The Sub-Committee were in full agreement that supporting a meal service for Waverley residents was a high priority and that not having some form of service was not an option for consideration.

25. The Sub-Committee reviewed alternative models delivered across the Country and were particularly interested in the Elmbridge service where the individual Day Centres provide a fresh cooked meal service for their local area. This forms part of outreach services provided by the local centres.
26. The Sub-Committee agreed they would like to see a fresh food meal service for residents. The Sub-Committee discussed the three possible options presented by RVS for the service; private model, Good Neighbours model or delivery only model. Reviewing the business cases for these models the first two were considered too expensive.
27. The Sub-Committee therefore focused their work on two possible models of delivery that would provide a fresh food meal; these two models were presented at Community O & S on Tuesday 14 June 2016.

### **Options considered by Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

28. **Option 1 -Do nothing / no change from the current delivery model**
  - g. Leave the service as is and try and operate with just Waverley's contribution of £30,000. However, it is clear that the current service model cannot be sustained at this level of funding.
  - h. The Royal Voluntary Service have already indicated that they could not operate the service at a financial loss as they would be unable to meet the shortfall in funding. The most likely therefore is the service would close.
  - i. If the service closes ensure clients receive transitional support – this includes sign posting to other services and ensuring that Adult Social Care respond to the needs of the most vulnerable service users.
29. **Option 2 - Meals prepared by Waverley Borough Council kitchen**
  - j. A fresh cooked meal service
  - k. To provide 25,000 to 30,000 meals per year
  - l. Three main meal choice options and two pudding options (at present 50% of Royal Voluntary Service clients have special dietary requirements)
  - m. Seek to partner with a voluntary organisation to assist with the distribution process
30. **Option 3 – Meals prepared by Waverley's day centres**
  - n. A fresh cooked meal service
  - o. To provide 25,000 to 30,000 meals per year
  - p. Three main meal choice options and two pudding options (at present 50% of Royal Voluntary Service clients have special dietary requirements)
  - q. Distribution from the individual centres

### **Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

31. The Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked the Sub-Committee and officers for their hard work with this review. Members discussed the concerns of local residents when the news was made about the funding and were pleased to note that the service would be continuing. It was felt that the Council should look into ways to promote the service more widely. It was agreed that the third option was preferred and that this be put forward to the Executive.

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## **Recommendation**

That the Executive:

1. considers the findings of the in-depth review,
2. provides feedback and observations on the three options; and
3. approves the request for officers to enter into discussions with the Waverley Borough Council funded Day Centres and the Royal Voluntary Service about the development of a replacement fresh cooked meal service, prepared by some or all of the Day Centres, utilising the current group of volunteers for meals and social contact and funded from the Council's contribution of £30,000 plus any future contributions from Surrey County Council. The intention would be to have the new service in place by 1 January 2017.

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## **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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