

Bolton Council

Report to:	The Cabinet		
Date of meeting:	4 th November 2019		
Report of:	Bernie Brown, Director of People Gerry Brough, Director of Place	Report number:	PS312.1
Contact officer:	Rachel Tanner, Deputy Director of People, Director of Adult Social Services Donna Ball, Deputy Director of Place	Telephone number	2130/6713
Report title:	Review of Community Meals and Catering Service – post consultation report		
Non-Confidential			
This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press and members of the public.			
Purpose:	To set out the results of consultation on proposals to review the Community Meals and Catering Service, to take into account a reduction in funding from 2019 onwards, and to seek approval from the Cabinet to implement the final proposals.		
Recommendations:	The Cabinet is recommended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approve the final proposals in this report in respect of the Community Meals and Catering Service and the Social Needs Transport Service, having due regard to the consultation feedback and the Equality Impact Assessment; and;• Subject to the approval of the Head of Paid Service, delegate implementation of the new structure, including details of voluntary redundancy arrangements and consequential redundancy selection, to the Chief Executive and Director of People		
Decision:			
Background documents:	<u>Consultation Report to Cabinet July 2019</u>		

Appendices:	Appendix 1 Summary of Current Service Provision Appendix 2 Current Catering Organisational Structure Chart Appendix 3 Revised Catering Organisational Structure Chart Appendix 4 Trade Union responses to the proposals Appendix 5 Summary of staff consultation responses Appendix 6 External stakeholder consultation responses Appendix 7 Equality Impact Assessment Please note that relevant Job Descriptions and Person Specifications are available on request.	
Signed:	Leader/Executive Cabinet Member	Monitoring Officer
Date:		

Consultation with other officers		
Finance	Yes	Lynne Hargreaves/Janet Pollard
Legal	No	
HR	Yes	Caroline Wheeler/Carol Aykol
Equality Impact Assessment required?	Yes	Jenny Foy/Lisa Corbett
(a) Pre-consultation reports Is there a need to consult on the proposals?		n/a
(b) Post consultation reports Please confirm that the consultation response has been taken into consideration in making the recommendations.		Yes
Vision outcomes Please identify the appropriate Vision outcome(s) that this report relates or contributes to by putting a cross in the relevant box.	1. Start Well	
	2.Live Well	
	3.Age Well	
	4.Prosporous	
	5. Clean and Green	
	6.Strong and Distinctive	
	a) Reforming Services.	√

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following consultation, the council approved further savings options in February 2019 of £23.5m for the 2019-21 period. This report sets out the final proposals, following consultation, of a review of the Community Meals and Catering Service in response. If agreed, the proposals would make a contribution of £299,760 to the budget option identified as “Review of the Community Meals Service” in the February 2019 budget report to Council.
- 1.2 The proposals within this report indicate a potential overall reduction in the Community Meals and Catering service staff and Business Support staff of an estimated 12.16 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) posts from the current 24.52 FTE posts (46 posts) of which 2.86 FTE (7 posts) are currently vacant and 2.54 FTE (7 posts) are eligible to transfer to Bolton Cares in accordance with the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE). Due to vacant posts held and a number of VER / VR requests received (without prejudice), it is hoped the impact of these reductions will be minimised if approved.
- 1.3 The report also sets out the impact of these proposals on the Social Needs Transport service within the Place Directorate, which delivers the community meals. 22 Drivers/Attendants in the Social Needs Transport Service staff establishment within the Place Directorate are affected, indicating a reduction of 258.45 operational hours per week. The impact of the reduction in hours equates to 6.99 FTE.
- 1.4 Details of the services affected by these proposals were set out in the consultation report and are included again for information at **Appendix 1**.
- 1.5 In July 2019 the Cabinet approved a report setting out proposals to changes to the Community Meals and Catering service to reflect the challenges faced, following which consultation was undertaken with staff, elected members, trade unions, service users and other relevant stakeholders. The current and proposed staffing structures for Community Meals and Catering Service are provided at **Appendices 2 and 3**.
- 1.6 The fundamental driver for this review is that the council needs to make savings; Community Meals is a non-statutory service, and the overall cost is being heavily subsidised by the council. Bolton Council is one of the few remaining councils in the North West of England providing this service in house and with a subsidy. Whilst it is well regarded by service users, it does not represent value for money.
- 1.7 Currently the cost per hot meal of delivery to lunch clubs and residents is £7.85, however recipients are charged only £4.59, resulting in a £3.26 subsidy. This is compounded by the loss of the £314,000 income from the termination of the council's Service Level Agreement (SLA) by Bolton Cares, effective from 8th November 2019. A move to full cost recovery would see service users paying £7.85. Commercial providers can offer the same service at a charge of £6.95, making the council-provided option unviable.
- 1.8 The recommended option was to end the council's hot meal delivery service, and remove other meal subsidies, to bring the council in line with the majority of other councils in the north west.
- 1.9 The proposal was to ensure that all service users who wished to continue receiving a community meal service (hot or cold) would be assisted to do so from alternative providers at a market rate. Should the final proposals be approved, the council will

support service users through the transition process to ensure that an alternative provision can be purchased directly, with no impact on quality but increased choice.

- 1.10 Bolton Cares, through ceasing their service level agreement, will be directly providing meals to service users in day care centres, and will charge service users accordingly.
- 1.11 Following the formal consultation period, this report now addresses the key issues arising and puts forward the final proposals for approval by the Cabinet.

2. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS AND ISSUES RAISED

2.1 Consultation Process

- 2.1.1 Following formal consultation on the strategic options set out in the December 2018 budget report, detailed proposals for the review of the Community Meals and Catering Service were brought forward for consultation in July 2019. The proposals also impact on the Social Needs Transport Service (SNT), which delivers meals to service users and services in the middle of the day.
- 2.1.2 During consultation, Bolton Cares Ltd advised the council that the weekend service in its older adults day care provision could be ceasing due to underutilisation, through service users choosing to have their needs met in alternative ways other than day care at weekends. Bolton Cares has now concluded its consultation with service users to bring the service to an end, and will be proceeding with implementation from the 11th November 2019.
- 2.1.3 The ceasing of older adults weekend day service means that there will no longer be a requirement for transport by the SNT service to these services at weekends. This affects those SNT staff working at weekends, and in turn affects the overall FTEs impacted. A revised table showing this detail is provided at section 3.3.1. A small number of Bolton Cares service users will be affected, and Bolton Cares will be consulting individuals on alternative ways of meeting their needs. Discussions about this were included in the consultation meetings with the trade unions.
- 2.1.4 Key elements of the formal consultation have included:

Service Users

- Writing to all 323 recipients of “Meals on Wheels” or their carers with information about the proposals and inviting them to complete a questionnaire to enable them to respond to the consultation;
- Providing a telephone help line to help with completing the questionnaire;
- Writing to the luncheon clubs to advise them of the proposals and invite responses to the consultation;
- The council’s registered care homes and Bolton Cares services users should see no difference in the service received and were therefore not directly consulted.

Trade Unions

- Weekly consultation meetings with an updated log, including responses, provided;
- Responding to specific requests for information from the trade unions;

Staff

- Formal briefing sessions and presentations for all staff in both services on 30th July 2019;
- Information, including, in addition to some of the things listed below, the original report to the Cabinet, a draft timetable, details of support for staff, and a comment from and responses to frequently asked questions;
- A paper copy of the log provided for staff via the trade unions at weekly joint meetings;
- Information on vacant posts available outside the review on request;
- Offering and holding, where requested, individual meetings with all members of staff, attended by a manager and or HR and with trade union representatives where required;
- Requesting expressions of interest (without prejudice at this stage) from staff for voluntary redundancy or retirement and for other forms of flexible working, including reductions in hours.

Stakeholders

- Key stakeholder organisations were consulted, and responses were received from Age UK and Bolton Community and Voluntary Services (CVS). These are provided at **Appendix 6**.
- A petition was received from Bolton and District Pensioners' Association.

2.2 Key issues raised during consultation

Service User feedback

- 2.2.1 A letter and questionnaire were sent to 323 current service users (or those who organise the service / pay the bill on their behalf) to ask them for their views on proposals to withdraw the '*Meals on Wheels*' service. The questionnaire was also sent via email to stakeholder organisations for their comments and placed on the council's website. 160 responses were received via the consultation questionnaire, a response rate of almost 50%.
- 2.2.2 Respondents were asked to say how the proposals (if approved) would impact on them. Many comments were related to the difficulties faced by service users when making a meal for themselves, due to health, disability, or issues related to old age. There were many positive comments about the current service, especially in relation to the quality of the food and the friendliness of the delivery staff. Respondents described the service as a 'god-send' and a 'life-line' and describe how a removal of the service would impact on their quality of life: 'distressed', 'travesty', 'catastrophic'.
- 2.2.3 Some respondents made specific comments about potential safeguarding / safety issues if the service was removed and the impact on carers' 'peace of mind'. There were also some worries about alternative providers (reduced service, reliability, welfare of service user, quality of food) and also the financial impact that the change would have on them. In relation to this, some service users offered to pay more to keep the community meals service, others suggested that the proposals would impact on other services (e.g. extra carer visits), which would negate the savings benefits.

- 2.2.4 There were concerns that some people would go hungry, would miss the human interaction with delivery staff, and in some cases would be unable to continue to live independently. A small number of service users explained that they didn't have the facilities to freeze and re-heat meals at home.
- 2.2.5 Respondents were also asked what support they would need if the proposals were approved. They requested information on alternative providers, and reassurance that new providers could deliver hot meals and ensure that specific needs could be met. They also asked that enough notice be given and for a smooth transition to the new service. Some further suggestions were made about sub-contracting or tendering the service so that the council could ensure standards were maintained.
- 2.2.6 Bolton CVS, in its response, raised issues around social isolation, support for suitable alternatives and advance warning / clear and timely communication. It also suggested that consideration be given to the diversity of food, to take account of religious and other dietary requirements, and to the provision of written and verbal information for those for whom English is not a first language and for those with sensory impairments. Bolton CVS stated the importance of involving carers and recognising the importance of the community and voluntary sector, so that groups can communicate with and support those affected.
- 2.2.7 Age UK, in its response, raised the importance of ensuring that vulnerable older people benefit from a hot, nutritious meal every day (whoever the supplier is). It stated that meals should meet the highest food hygiene standards, be delivered by properly screened, trained and empathetic staff, and be affordable and competitively priced. Age UK raised the importance of the council supporting transition to new providers and offered assistance via its Information and Advice service.
- 2.2.8 Details of the survey results are provided at **Appendix 6**.

Staff Consultation

- 2.2.9 **Appendix 4** sets out a summary of the key consultation issues raised, and the response from management. This includes issues raised via the unions at weekly consultation meetings, as well as issues raised by individual staff members via emails, personal meetings, and staff briefing sessions.
- 2.2.10 The formal joint trade union response to the proposals is set out in full at **Appendix 5**. In summary, the key issues raised in that response and during consultation (see summary at Appendix 4) are:
- Availability, cost, and quality of alternative provision options, including dietary requirements;
 - Concern about service users' welfare in future;
 - The service user voice and accessing information on alternative providers;
 - Issues relating to terms and conditions;
 - Potential to mitigate lost hours in the SNT service by reviewing current provision and options;
 - TUPE queries.

3 **FINAL PROPOSALS AND IMPACTS**

3.1 **Response to consultation feedback**

3.1.1 The consultation feedback and response has been critical in understanding the views of service users, families and staff and to assist in understanding implications for implementation in moving forward these proposals. The value of a community meals service to support vulnerable people is not disputed. It must be emphasised that the proposals are to move forward in supporting people to continue receiving a service from alternative providers due to the cost of the current service being unsustainable. Any individual who requires support will be assisted to ensure that they can access such a service and, where they have additional needs, these would be assessed and met through social care statutory services or other voluntary, community or other providers.

3.1.1 Market analysis has been completed to ensure that an alternative hot meal service could be provided in Bolton and consideration as to whether it would be able to offer the added value aspects as described by families and staff.

3.1.2 Confirmation has been provided by a major national private provider that they wish to operate in Bolton at the rate of £6.95 per hot meal and £4.55 per frozen meal. This provider operates in the neighbouring boroughs of Wigan, Bury, Chorley, and Trafford, as well as other Greater Manchester areas of Stockport, Tameside and Manchester, and can mobilise the service rapidly. In addition, a number of local providers in neighbourhoods have expressed an interest in providing a service. Any arrangements with alternative providers will be private arrangements between the provider and the service users.

3.1.3 Consideration has been given to the concerns raised by service users and families in relation to:

- **Reliability and the financial impact** - the alternative hot meal provider has confirmed that they will work with the council in a planned hand over of services at the individual request, where they will develop individual support plans with the individual. The provider has stated that they will use discretion to assist individuals who may have financial difficulties to graduate the increase in costs over a period of time to mitigate impact.
- **Welfare of service user** – it is acknowledged that the service does assist individuals on occasions if there is a welfare issue on their visits. Examples provided were in relation to contacting family, doctors, social workers. The alternative providers have advised that their approach is akin to that of the council service. Staff are DBS checked, references taken and training in adult care is provided. They will liaise with family as requested in their plans if they are concerned for welfare of service users, as well as having contact with social workers and assisting to raise emergency services if needed. Individuals that need greater levels of support will be assessed and supported by social care or other voluntary or community social enterprise services in their neighbourhood.
- **Quality of food and nutrition** – the alternative hot and cold meal providers that the council will signpost to have accreditation in relation to nutrition, hygiene and providing for dietary and ethnic or religious requirements. Many of the providers

use the same meals as are currently provided by the council service but offer the full range of choice available that the council is unable to do. They also provide a sandwich service for tea time at the hot meal visit at a cost of £4.15, which is over and above the current council service provision.

- **Availability of equipment** – some service users raised concerns that they did not have the facilities to freeze or reheat meals – during implementation of these proposals and ceasing of the inhouse service consideration will be given to whether a service user requires support to acquire equipment, and a direct payment will be offered to those who are unable to afford the equipment.
- **Smooth transition, communication and information** – stakeholders and service users raised concerns about there being sufficient information on alternatives and if the proposals were approved sufficient time for a smooth transition. The full implementation plan to cease the inhouse community meals service includes the development of information on the council's website and will detail private providers operating in Bolton whom the council will signpost people to. Information will also be provided to the current users, and planned transition meetings will be held with service users and their families to consider their individual needs. These arrangements would be implemented over an 8-week period.
- **Social isolation** – it is recognised that the delivery drivers have provided a valued service of social interaction with service users. Social isolation is a key priority for Bolton Vision Partnership, with many developments across the borough to address this at a neighbourhood level, with increased investment in community and voluntary sector through the Bolton Fund. It is acknowledged that the social interaction with the community meals provider is important, but this should not be a solution to social isolation, therefore, in partnership with Age UK and the voluntary and community sector an offer of connecting individuals to community assets will be paramount to the individual conversations as part of the implementation process to cease the in house community meals service and assisting individuals to source the service privately.

- 3.1.4 It is to be noted that a number of service users have chosen to cease their service during the consultation period, and have already moved to alternative arrangements, or their circumstances have changed. The number of individuals in receipt of community meals has reduced to 280 service users from approximately 310.
- 3.1.5 It is proposed that the council will carry out follow-up with service users post transition to check on their welfare and that they have sourced an appropriate alternative provider, or are self-sufficient in this area. The decline in numbers, however, has further impacted on the financial sustainability of the service, and referrals have also reduced, indicating that some people are already moving to the alternative provision in the borough.
- 3.1.6 Therefore, after full consideration of the areas of concern raised by service users, families, stakeholders, staff and the Trade Unions, the final proposals do not include any significant changes. The detailed implementation plans will take full due regard

to the issues raised, this will also include a review of wider welfare needs of individuals and opportunities to address social isolation for vulnerable people.

3.2 Impact

3.2.1 Staffing Impact on Community Meals and Catering Service

3.2.2 It should be noted that, during the consultation period, a member of staff retired from the council.

3.2.3 Currently, four people (3.46 FTE) have expressed an interest in taking voluntary redundancy since receiving their individual estimated figures for pension and redundancy. At the time of publication of this report these four people have indicated without prejudice their wish to leave. Final decisions will be required from each of those interested in voluntary redundancy by the end of November 2019, after which time, each case will be considered for approval in accordance with council policy and procedures.

3.2.4 As such, the revised ringfence arrangements at table D should be regarded as indicative only. Nevertheless, it is clear that the number of staff ultimately facing redeployment will have reduced, from the 5.72 FTE originally anticipated to 2.51 FTE, if voluntary redundancy requests are approved.

3.3 Staffing Impact on Social Needs Transport Service

3.3.1 Due to Bolton Cares advising the council, during consultation, that the weekend service could be ceasing from 11th November 2019, there will be a further reduction in the number of contracted hours of existing drivers and passenger assistants that are employed at weekend as this service will no longer be operating at weekends. The following table provides a revised summary of the impact of the proposals.

SNT Staff Hours – Updated Table including the impact of Loss of Weekend Split shift runs for 5 No. staff:

	Average Contractual Hours per year	Term Time 38 weeks	Outside Term Time 14 weeks	Average 52 weeks	Reduced Hours	Percentage Reduction
1	34.04	28.75	8.75	23.37	10.67	31.4
2	30.58	23	14	20.58	10.00	32.7
3	10	5.5	3.5	4.96	5.04	50.4
4	29.09	28.75	17.5	25.72	3.37	11.6
5	33.26	23.25	14	20.76	12.50	37.6
6	29.09	28.75	17.5	25.72	3.37	11.6
7	15	0	0	0.00	15.00	100.0
8	21.52	17.25	5.25	14.02	7.50	34.9
9	37 + 3hrs O/T	27.5	27.5	27.50	12.50	31.3
10	37 + 3hrs O/T	27.5	27.5	27.50	12.50	31.3
11	37 + 3hrs O/T	27.5	27.5	27.50	12.50	31.3
12	37 + 3hrs O/T	27.5	27.5	27.50	12.50	31.3
13	37 + 3hrs O/T	27.5	27.5	27.50	12.50	31.3
14	37 + 3hrs O/T	27.5	27.5	27.50	12.50	31.3
15	37 + 3hrs O/T	27.5	27.5	27.50	12.50	31.3
16	31.43	17.25	10.5	15.43	16.00	50.9
17	16	0	0	0.00	16.00	100.0
18	46	0	0	46.00	46.00	100.00
19	16	0	0	0.00	16.00	100.0
20	16	0	0	0.00	16.00	100.0
21	26.29 + 7%	11.5	7	10.29	16.00	60.8
22	36.25 Term time	28.75	0	28.75	7.50	20.7
					258.45	

- 3.3.2 As staff have different working patterns the impact on individuals is variable. The percentage of contracted hours reduction ranges from 11.6% to 100%, with an overall reduction in operational hours of 258.45 hours per week, or 6.99 FTE, across 22 staff in total.
- 3.3.3 The test for redundancy is met because the community meals and the weekend services are ceasing, and the staff directly affected will lose these contractual hours. The reduction in hours allows staff to access redundancy or redeployment, or to accept a variation to contract. These options will be worked through on implementation.
- 3.3.4 For the staff affected by the change listed in the above table, there is no entitlement to salary protection, as there is no reduction in the grade of the post which remains Grade C (3) and the imposed change in working hours exceeds 10%. This is in line with corporate policy.
- 3.3.5 As there is no other transport work over the lunchtime period, management has committed to seek to mitigate the loss of hours on meals runs / weekend split shifts by making available those hours currently undertaken by casual and fixed term staff. As working patterns for individual permanent staff are different, the extent to which this can be achieved will depend on the availability of the staff on days/times they are

currently not working across the year, and this will need to be worked through during implementation.

4 OPTIONS

- 4.1 The unions submitted two alternative suggestions during consultation:

Suggestion 1

Promote community meals to increase demand, condense rounds and buy in frozen meals for distribution. These meals could be provided to day centre clients which could produce a profit.

Response

Promoting community meals would not fully improve cost efficiency, as the service is already heavily subsidised, and the savings would not be realised. Meals are already bought in by the community meals service and heated for delivery. Bolton Cares have already terminated the SLA and will be providing the meals within its day centres, their model is to purchase in frozen meals and for the staff TUPE transferring to heat the meals.

The service has dramatically declined by approximately 30 service users who in the main have found alternative arrangements, the likelihood of increasing demand is very low.

Suggestion 2

Unison and GMB propose that Bolton Cares promotes a new luncheon club service for the elderly, to operate at Winifred Kettle, Brazley Centre, and Thicketford Centre at a charge of £25 for meal and transport. Transport rounds could be condensed.

Response

The provision of lunch clubs is not a statutory service, and the council would not fund transport to non-assessed services. Bolton Cares would need to consider the viability and full cost recovery of taking on such a service. A number of voluntary and faith providers run lunch clubs, and therefore the council does not see this as a service that it needs to provide. The proposed cost is significantly above the market rate for luncheon clubs and is not a viable or affordable option.

5 IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial

5.1.2 Table 1 – Proposed Budget

The proposed budget shows the remaining budget for the meal service in the three care homes: Darley Court, Laburnum Lodge and Wilfred Geere. The table demonstrates that a saving of £299,760 is possible by ending the community meals service, it also demonstrates the reduction through the termination of the SLA by Bolton Cares Limited. The final proposed budget for the service is as follows:

	Budget 19/20	Proposed Savings	Proposed Budget
<i>Employees</i>	692,260	-342,222	350,038
<i>Premises</i>	16,219	-7,131	9,088
<i>Transport</i>	481,932	-481,932	0
<i>Supplies</i>	379,932	-241,359	138,573
<i>Central Support</i>	62,339	-62,339	0
<i>Income</i>	-835,223	835,223	0
Total	797,459	-299,760	497,699

5.2 Legal

5.2.1 Those staff identified as being eligible for transfers under TUPE have been briefed as part of the wider service review. Consultation on the TUPE process commenced on 2nd October 2019 as part of Regulation 13 of TUPE. 2.54 FTE Catering assistant staff will TUPE to Bolton Cares Ltd on 11th November 2019. This process has arisen due to Bolton Cares ending the SLA, and therefore sits outside of the wider service review process covered by this report.

5.2.2 All other staffing impacts on the Community Meals and Catering Service and the Social Needs Transport Service will be addressed during the implementation of the proposals outlined in this report. The Council will comply with all relevant legislation guidance and Council policies.

5.3 HR

Community Meals and Catering Service

5.3.1 Implementation of the new service model will require a service restructure, including proposed redundancies within the service. The current and proposed staff structures for the Community Meals and Catering Service are provided at **Appendices 2 and 3**. Under the terms of these proposals Tables A to D below set out the detail of the changes proposed to the current structure. Staff will be managed and supported in line with council policy.

Table A: The following posts (currently held vacant) would be disestablished:

FTE	Grade	Existing Job Title
1.49	D	Cook
0.40	C	Administrator
0.32	A	Bar Person
0.65	A	Kitchen Assistant *

* Please note this Kitchen Assistant post became vacant during consultation.

Table B: The following posts would be redundant from the current structure:

FTE	Grade	Existing Job Title
1.0	J	Catering Quality and Standards Manager
3.51	D	Cook
0.56**	A	Catering Assistants / Kitchen Assistants
1.69	C	Administrators (Business Support)

** Please note the impact on the Catering / Kitchen Assistants post redundant has reduced as a result of a vacancy emerging, as reflected in Table A.

Table C: The following posts will be eligible for TUPE to Bolton Cares as a result of the SLA ending with them on 10th November 2019

FTE	Grade	Existing Job Title
2.22	A	Kitchen Assistant
0.16	B	Bar Manager
0.16	A	Bar Person

Table D: There are more people than comparable posts in the following roles. These individuals will be subject to a redundancy selection exercise for a post in the new structure:

FTE	Proposed Job Title	FTE	Ring Fence of Existing Job Title
7.10	Cook Grade D	10.61	Cook Grade D
5.25	Kitchen Assistant Grade A	5.81^	Kitchen Assistants / Catering Assistants

^Please note the FTE of Kitchen / Catering Assistants in the ring fence has reduced as a result of a vacancy.

Social Needs Transport Service

- 5.3.2 Discontinuing the community meals service impacts on 22 permanent staff who are contracted to deliver meals to clients over the lunchtime period. There will be a further reduction in contracted hours for the weekend staff following Bolton Cares notification that the weekend service could be ceasing from 11th November 2019. The actual impact on staff varies from individual to individual as identified in table at 3.3.1. Staff will be managed and supported during the implementation stage in line with Council Policy and Procedures.

5.4 Other

- 5.4.1 It is anticipated that implementation of final proposals will commence during November 2019, with required redundancy selection processes taking place during November and December 2019. It is anticipated the proposals for the catering staff

would be completed by mid-December 2019 and the Community Meals staff and associated Social Needs Transport staff by the 31st January 2020 or sooner.

- 5.4.2 Those catering staff eligible to transfer to Bolton Cares will transfer on the 11th November 2019, following appropriate consultation processes in accordance with TUPE.

6. EIA

- 6.1 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty provision of Equality Act 2010, the Council must have due regard to:
- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
 - Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
 - Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 6.2 It is therefore important to consider how the proposals contained within this report may positively or negatively affect this work. To support this analysis, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out on the proposals outlined in this report and is attached at Appendix 7.
- 6.3 The EIA looks at the anticipated (positive and/or negative) impacts of the proposal on people from Bolton's diverse communities, and whether any group (or groups) is likely to be directly or indirectly differentially affected. This Equality Impact Assessment builds on the exercise, which was completed on the initial review options, and summarises the stakeholder consultation which has been completed as part of this review.
- 6.4 Due to the nature of the proposals, and the need to make significant savings, it is anticipated that there could be some adverse impact on some groups. Care has been taken to understand the issues arising, and to take action to mitigate the possible impacts as far as practicable.
- 6.5 The equality considerations are set out in more detail in the Equality Impact Assessment. Should the proposals be approved by the Cabinet, they will be kept under review as part of the overall budget process.

7. VISION 2030

- 7.1 In order for Bolton Council to contribute to the Vision 2030 Strategy, it will need to manage complex programmes of change across the organisation, making sure they are deliverable, accountable and effective. Within the Vision 2030 Strategy, the Council will strive to deliver services more efficiently, through service improvement, redesign, recommissioning and decommissioning, based on evidence of impact. The proposals within this report contribute to this strategic council aim.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:

- Approve the final proposals in this report in respect of the Community Meals and Catering Service and the Social Needs Transport Service, having due regard to the consultation feedback and the Equality Impact Assessment; and;
- Subject to the approval of the Head of Paid Service, delegate implementation of the new structure, including details of voluntary redundancy arrangements and consequential redundancy selection, to the Chief Executive and Director of People

- **Appendix 1 – Summary of Current Service Provision in Community Meals and Catering**

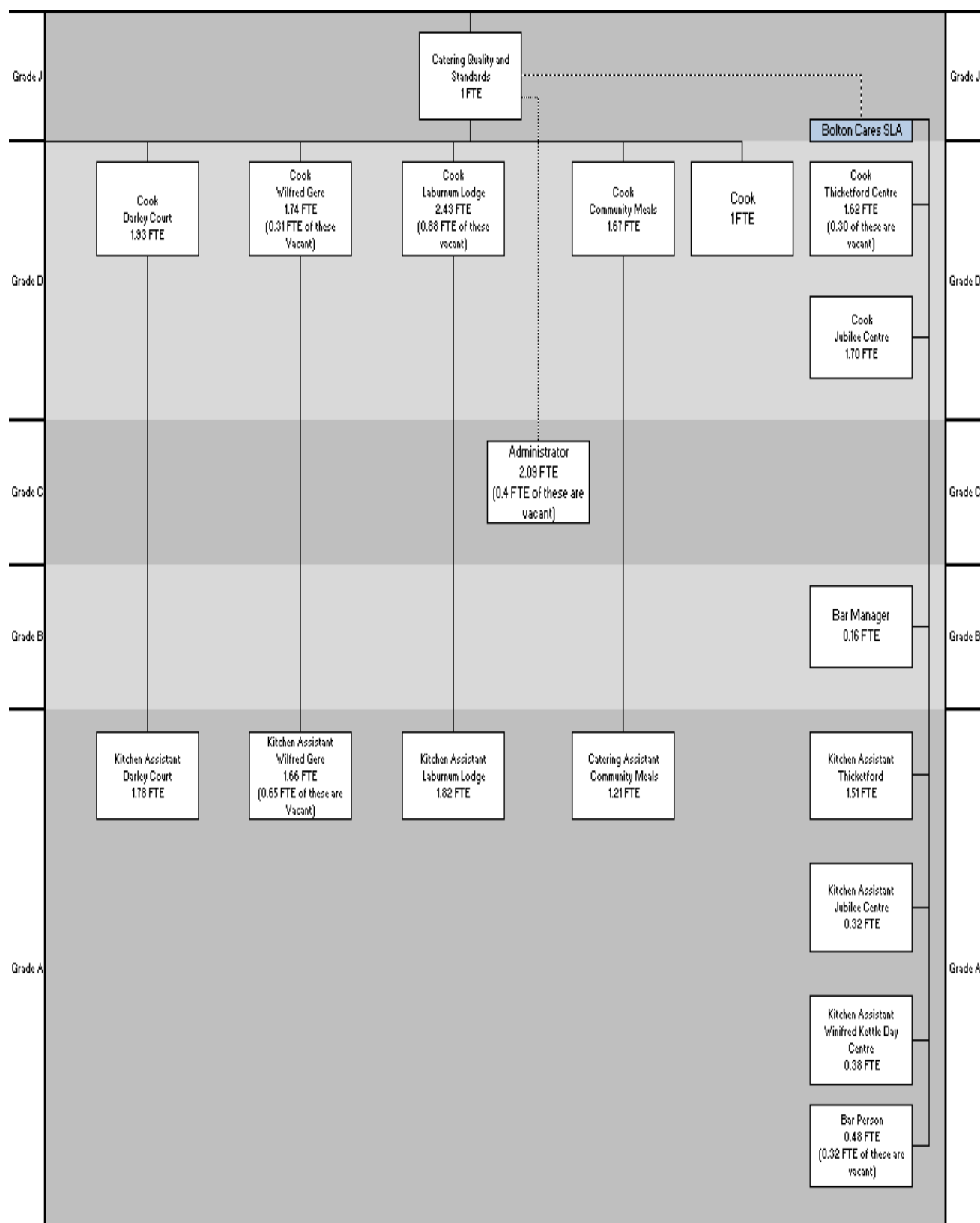
- Full kitchen service to provide 3 meals per day, plus drinks and snacks, in three care homes: Darley Court, Laburnum lodge, and Wilfred Geere;
- Delivery of 1,700 hot meals and puddings per week at lunchtime to 310 people across Bolton at the start of consultation and is now 1,418 meals to 280 people;
- Delivery of 270 meals at lunchtime per week to three lunch clubs operating in Eldon, Campbell and Merton Extra Housing Schemes in Bolton;
- Delivery of 1,000 lunches per year to Horwich Tuesday Club.

In addition, Bolton Cares Ltd currently has served notice on its service level agreement (SLA) with Bolton Council for the provision of meals and related services, worth £314,000 of income for the council. The agreement is due to end on the 8th November 2019. The SLA includes the following services:

- Delivery of 250 meals per week to Winifred Kettle and Brazley Centre Older Adults Day Care at lunchtime;
- Full kitchen service to provide hot meals and snacks at lunchtimes in Jubilee and Thicketford Day Care Centres;
- Bar service at the Jubilee centre in support of social and community functions.

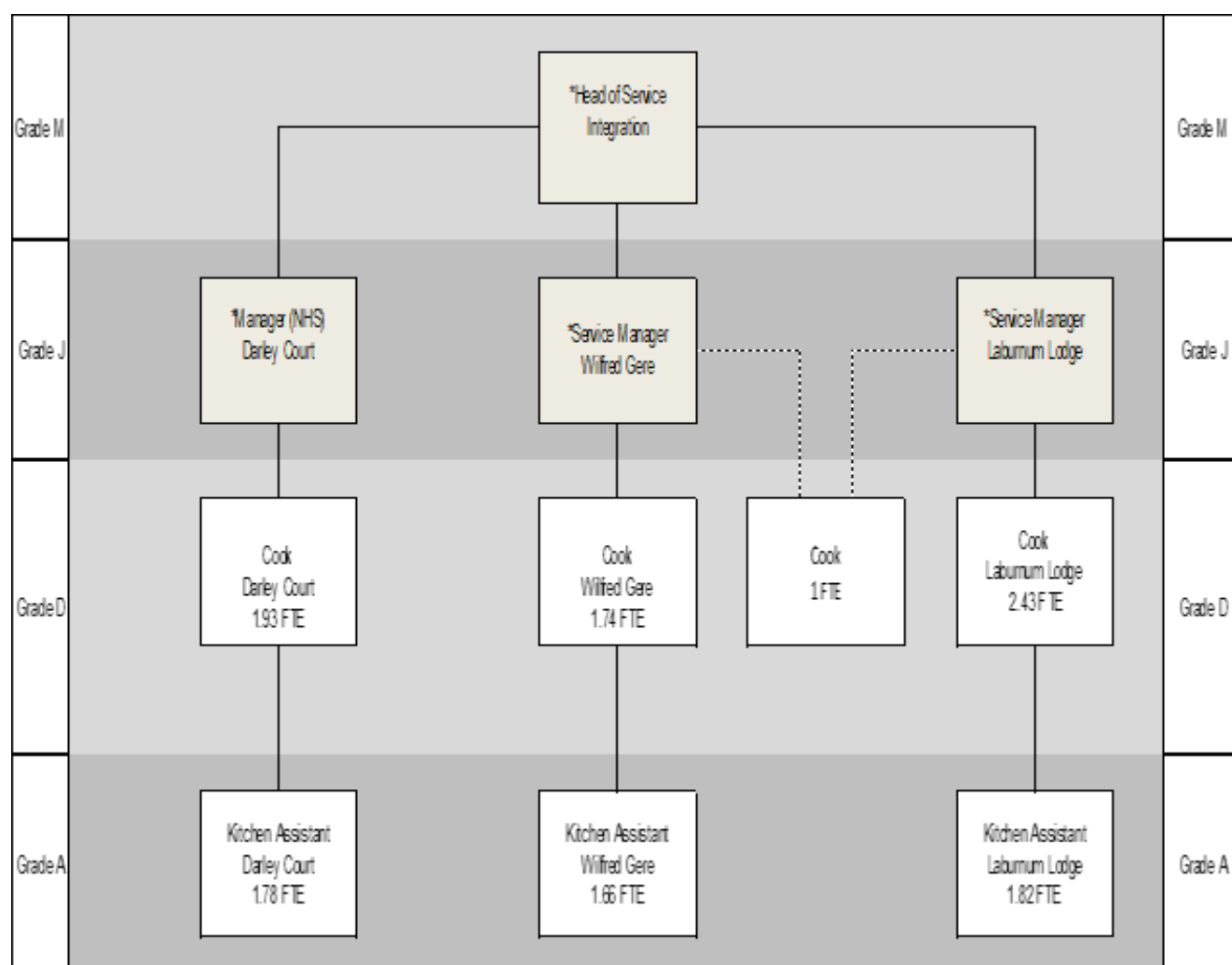
Provision of food and drink in Darley Court, Laburnum lodge, and Wilfred Geere is not subject to any review in level of provision, and this service will continue, although staff across all the named services are in scope of this review, due to the job roles being the same.

Appendix 2 – Current Organisational Structure – Community Meals and Catering Service



Appendix 3 – Final Organisational Structure (Proposed) – Community Meals and Catering Service

***Out of Scope**





PROPOSALS FROM UNISON & GMB MEMBERS

PROMOTION & INVESTMENT IN THE COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE

It is management's position to work through the consultation process and deliver Bolton Council's preferred option to cease the delivery of Community Meals aka "Meals on Wheels".

UNISON & GMB are jointly committed to saving the Meals on Wheels Service for the elderly and vulnerable in our community and also save jobs. We therefore ask that Bolton Council reconsiders its proposal to cease the funding of this most valued service.

'Running Down the Service by Stealth'

- Our members in Social Needs Transport have expressed their concerns that due to a lack of investment and promotion in the Community Meals Service they have seen a decline in the uptake in the meals.
- Meals delivery at weekend has been negatively impacted a contributory factor could be due to the distribution of an information leaflet to clients which only offers a Monday to Friday service.
- Members also report that over time the efficiency of the routes has been neglected where a single meal is delivered on a single bus which is not cost effective.

Management Response: The "Meals on Wheels" Community Meals Service is a non-statutory service which is heavily subsidised by the council. The service has not had investment withheld or a change in how it is promoted. The information leaflet referred to has not been shared with management to consider. In discussions with trade unions referred to this relating to day services rather than community meals.

Efficiency of routes would deliver some reduction in cost but not to the scale required.

All Year-round service

The Social Needs Transport Staff deliver meals to clients 365 days of the year this includes all Bank Holidays – Easter, Christmas and New Year.

Community Meals: A ‘Lifeline’ Service

There are many positives to continuing with the meals service. The service is not just delivering a nutritious meal to a client, the delivery provides much needed contact to some of the most isolated members of our community. A rapport of friendship and trust is built between the driver and the client – this is known to the Social Needs Drivers and management as “Added Value” to the service.

On many occasions whilst delivering meals the driver will encounter their client fallen or collapsed and in need of emergency services, the driver will stay with the client, provide assurance and comfort until family or services arrive, the drivers are trained in First Aid and able to perform CPR if necessary. Sadly, on occasions the drivers have also found their clients deceased. These members of staff accept this as the care aspect of their role.

Bolton Council has a duty of care to our elderly residents and the meals on wheels service helps provide this.

Management Response:

Community Meals is a non statutory service for which the Council does not have a duty to provide, the proposals are to ensure vulnerable adults are assisted to purchase this service from an alternative provider rather than the Council, no one that’s needs assistance will be left without support, where individuals have greater needs these will be met through social care or alternatives through VCSE.

It is acknowledged that there is a welfare aspect to the delivery of the service and consideration has been given to whether this will be covered by alternative providers. Assurance has been provided that alternative providers also offer a welfare aspect to their service and demonstrate the ability to respond to issues e.g. liaising with family, social services, and emergency services.

Analysis of the number of contacts the Community Meals service received monthly has been undertaken this demonstrates that there are on average 57 contacts that required further action per month, some of which would have been welfare issues with only 1 incident in the past 6 months requiring emergency services.

Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership:

It is important to acknowledge that Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership are spearheading a campaign to promote Nutrition and Hydration to vulnerable adults and Bolton Council is a pilot for this scheme.

Our delivery staff already provide their input into this; they are issued with instructions to “encourage clients to eat”. This also includes hydration for example during hot weather the Drivers leave water for clients encouraging them to drink, they ensure windows and curtains are closed.

Ceasing the Community Meals/Added Value Service the Council will lose a vital opportunity to the success of the pilot scheme.

Management Response: Nutrition and hydration is a key priority and Bolton is leading the way in GM on this area for care homes at this stage. Wider campaigns will include all providers including those in the areas covering community meals.

There are no other GM areas that provide the community meals service in house.`

Political Choice

The choice to continue with the service is a ***political choice***.

UNISON AND GMB ask Bolton Council to continue with the subsidy currently provided for the Community Meals Service and to invest and promote the service to increase it, more meals delivery will reduce the cost of the meal.

- Political Choice has seen money made available for Transition to change i.e. Assistant Director circa £100k, with a HR post for Transition £37k. Although these are only for two years it is money which could lead kick start investment into the meals service.

Management Response: Further clarification would be required to consider what Investment the Trade unions propose into community meals to make this a financially viable option.

- The Government is allocating funding to local authorities for investment in Adult Social Care, we ask that Bolton Council investigate if monies allocated to Bolton can be used to invest in the Community Meals Services.

Management Response: The government announced funding for social care in the Autumn spending round, further details on the conditions and usage of this across childrens and adults services is awaited, and not expected for some time. However, this would only partly cover the current demand pressure across social care statutory services and cost pressures, therefore it would not be recommended to be used on this service where a more cost-effective alternative is available.

- We believe that service users would be prepared to pay a modest rise for the cost of the meal may which would help towards 'in year savings' but still retaining the service and with a commitment to continued promotion.

Management Response: A modest rise would still require significant subsidy from the Council, if this moved to a full cost recovery service users would be paying a minimum of £1.85 per meal more than buying from an alternative provider.

- Public Health recognised the value of the continued subsidy for free school meals. The provision of a healthy nutritious meal at least once a day is vital for a child to thrive, grow, be educated and become a valued member of our society. We ask that Bolton Council explores the possibility that Public Health may contribute towards Community Meals. The implications of the loss of a hot nutritious meal for the elderly and vulnerable can lead to malnutrition, dehydration, more hospitalisations and further isolation.

Management Response: Public Health no longer subsidises the school meals program in Bolton, and has significant pressures on budgets to meet all statutory requirements. Nutritious meals can be provided by alternative providers, therefore it would not be good use of Public Health money to subsidise a service that is more cost effective for users to purchase independently.

- UNISON & GMB ask that Bolton Council also investigate the investment into the re-introduction of an evening snack i.e. a drink – water/juice and sandwiches, this again supports the pilot scheme towards nutrition and hydration for the vulnerable adults in the Bolton Family.

Management Response: An evening cold meal, such as a sandwich, can be purchased from alternative providers at competitive prices. It is not financially viable for the Community Meals service to provide this, as full cost recovery would make the charge to service users prohibitive.

- Further investment can be made with the introduction of Luncheon Clubs, our members in Social Needs Transport have reported that there is a demand for this type of service. Some clients find that a full day at a day centre is too tiring, however they do enjoy a couple of hours in the middle of the day to socialise and enjoy a nutritious meal, company at a Luncheon Club provides this service. There are currently some Luncheon Clubs in operation however these are provided by volunteers who cannot meet the demand for this service. The luncheon clubs can be held at day centres 7 days per week, providing much needed respite for family members who may look after their elderly relatives during the week but need a break at weekends.

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/combating-loneliness-guid-24e_march_2018.pdf

https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/policy-positions/health-and-wellbeing/ppp_loneliness_and_isolation_uk.pdf

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/nutrition-and-hydration/cpd/nutrition-for-vulnerable-groups>

Management Response: The provision of lunch clubs is not a statutory service, and the council would not fund transport to non-assessed services. Bolton Cares would need to consider the viability and full cost recovery of taking on such a service. A number of voluntary and faith providers run lunch clubs, and therefore the council does not see this as a service that it needs to provide. The proposed cost is significantly above the market rate for luncheon clubs and is not a viable or affordable option.

UNISON and GMB ask the management to consider the above proposal to seek continued funding of the Community Meals Service and to promote and invest in this valued service.

Jackie Peploe/Alan Flatley
UNISON Branch Chairperson GMB Bolton Branch Secretary

16th September 2020

Appendix 5 – Summary of Consultation Responses for Review of Community Meals and Catering Service, and related SNT Review, July 2019

Please note that a redacted version of the full consultation log is available upon request. Key: TU – Trade unions; I – Individual Staff member; S = External Stakeholder

Log No.	From whom? TU//S	Issue Raised	Management Response/comments
Issues relating to alternative providers and service users			
1	TU	Specific questions relating to alternative providers e.g. availability, the meals (nutrition, frozen and Halal) and service provided, costings.	<p>Market has developed and there are providers of frozen and hot meals. A number of community providers have come forward and suggestions have been received from community hub. Information available to enable people to make a choice, and support will be provided for people to make appropriate decisions as part of an implementation process.</p> <p>ICare Cuisine (www.icarecuisine.co.uk) was given as an example of a private provider. They can provide nutritional guidance as well as accredited Halal meals etc.</p>
2	TU	Why can other companies provide meals at a cheaper rate.	This is a commercial consideration for individual providers and therefore that information is not available to the council.
11	TU	Concerns regarding service users. consultation; ensuring those needing support find a suitable alternative and make an appropriate decision.	<p>Confirmed that all service users and/or a designated family member or advocate were sent a letter and questionnaire detailing the proposals and how to raise any issues or concerns.</p> <p>Management confirmed that they can offer and ask whether service users need assistance or an assessment.</p>
Issues relating to the current service and alternative suggestions			
4	TU	Requests for data relating to number of community meals being provided, areas covered, specific costings etc.	All data requested was provided to Trade Unions.

5	TU	<p>Alternative suggestion provided (1)</p> <p>Promote Community Meals to increase demand, condense rounds, buy in frozen meals which can be heated at day centres by the general assistants currently working on site.</p>	<p>A viable business case to mitigate the need to remove the council subsidy due to budget pressures was not provided.</p> <p>Meals are already bought in by the community meals service and heated for delivery, essentially this proposal is what is already happening in the service. The day centre will only look at cost recovery and not making a profit.</p>
6	Tu	<p>Alternative suggestion provided (2)</p> <p>Propose to management that Bolton Cares promotes a new Luncheon Club service (£25 for meal and transportation), allowing those who find a whole day at a day centre too long.</p>	<p>Luncheon clubs is not a statutory service and the council would not fund transport to non-assessed services. Bolton Cares would need to consider the viability and full cost recovery if it was to take on such a service.</p> <p>A number of voluntary and community organisations and faith providers run luncheon clubs and therefore the council does not see this as a service that it needs to provide.</p>
7	TU	<p>Further information requested relating to Bolton Cares, Service Level Agreements and variations to contracts.</p>	<p>Relevant information and Service Level Agreement were shared with the Trade Unions.</p>
8	TU	<p>Concern as to whether the changes to other services relating to the teams would impact the staff involved in this review. (Respite Transport and weekend service).</p>	<p>Information was shared during consultation on the impact of Bolton Cares considering reducing weekend daycare, the respite transport was a service that was not a commissioned service, this has already ceased. The impact of these changes have been shared and revised table of impact shared.</p>
9	TU	<p>Private Hire – Can management scrutinise the work allocated to private hire contracts to assess what work can be brought back in house to cover the hours that are proposed to cease around Community Meals delivery.</p> <p>Members who want to retain their working hours have asked that management look at utilising staff and vehicles to deliver stores equipment to service users. To cease use of casual/agency workers currently employed within the SNT Service who work during 11.00 a.m. – 1.30 p.m.</p>	<p>Taxi/Minibus Home to School Transport routes are due to be renewed for the school term commencing September 2019. The number of pupils transported by the internal fleet is always maximised before offering routes out to contractors, and this is predominantly split shift work at the front and back end of the day. Management agreed to scrutinise the externally contracted schools transport work in the middle of the day, plus any work out of district which might be cost effective for existing drivers to carry out to mitigate any loss in driver hours.</p> <p>Management also agreed to scrutinise requests for disability</p>

			<p>equipment stores delivery work carried out in the middle of the day</p> <p>Analysis revealed that there are no hours worked by casual staff other than drivers on Meals on Wheels over lunchtime, SNT do not employ agency staff, and there are no hours worked by fixed term staff.</p> <p>Private hire contracts cover a small number of journeys home on a temporary basis from a Bolton school, as well as from a nursery school.</p>
14		Social Needs Transport – (Q3 SNT) – could service users pay for transport through SNT instead of using taxis or family transport.	The cost of using in-house staff and fleet is more expensive than the taxi alternative.
15		Concern about the impact to support Civil Contingencies following any cuts within the review.	The fleet is not suffering a reduction therefore would still be available for use for civil contingencies.
Issues relating to staff terms and conditions			
3	TU	Questions raised around TUPE, such as, eligibility; assurances re future plans; redundancy instead of TUPE; the impact of weekend day care service provision for those eligible for TUPE; able to TUPE to new provider.	All queries relating to TUPE were answered in line with statutory guidelines.
13		Request for redeployment opportunities for those whose hours are impacted.	All queries relating to redundancy, retirement, redeployment and other individual staffing queries were responded to in line with the Council's HR policies and procedures.

Appendix 6: Public consultation

Summary

A letter and questionnaire were sent to 323 current service users (or those who organise the service / pay the bill on their behalf) to ask them for their views on proposals to withdraw the '*Meals on Wheels*' service. The questionnaire was also sent via email to stakeholder organisations for their comments, and placed on the council's website. 160 responses were received via the consultation questionnaire, a response rate of almost 50%.

Respondents were asked to say how the proposals (if approved) would impact on them. Many comments were related to the difficulties faced by service users when making a meal for themselves, due to health, disability or issues related to old age. There were many positive comments about the current service, especially in relation to the quality of the food and the friendliness of the delivery staff. Respondents described the service as a 'god-send' and a 'life-line' and describe how a removal of the service would impact on their quality of life: 'distressed', 'travesty', 'catastrophic'.

Some respondents made specific comments about potential safeguarding / safety issues if the service was removed and the impact on carers' 'peace of mind'. There were also some worries about alternative providers (reduced service, reliability, welfare of service user, quality of food) and also the financial impact that the change would have on them. In relation to this, some service users offered to pay more to keep the community meals service, others suggested that the proposals would impact on other services (e.g. extra carer visits), which would negate the savings benefits.

Some individuals raised concerns that people would go hungry, would miss the human interaction with delivery staff, and in some cases would be unable to continue to live independently. A small number of service users explained that they didn't have the facilities to freeze and re-heat meals at home.

Respondents were also asked what support they would need if the proposals were approved. They requested information on alternative providers, and reassurance that new providers could deliver hot meals and ensure that specific needs could be met. They also asked that enough notice be given and for a smooth transition to the new service. Some further suggestions were made about subcontracting or tendering the service so that the council could ensure standards were maintained.

CVS, in its response, raised issues around social isolation, support for suitable alternatives and advance warning / clear and timely communication. It also suggested that consideration be given to the diversity of food, to take account of religious and other dietary requirements, and to the provision of written and verbal information for those for whom English is not a first language and those with sensory impairments. Bolton CVS explained the importance of involving carers and recognising the importance of the community and voluntary sector, so that groups can communicate with and support those affected.

Age UK, in its response, raised the importance of ensuring that vulnerable older people benefit from a hot, nutritious meal every day (whoever the supplier is). It stated that meals should meet the highest food hygiene standards, be delivered by properly screened, trained and empathetic staff, and be affordable and competitively priced. Age UK raised the importance of the council supporting transition to new providers and offered assistance via its Information and Advice service.

Methodology

The consultation sought to ascertain the views of service users and their carers on the proposals to withdraw the community meals '*Meals on Wheels*' service and support customers to find an alternative provider.

A letter and questionnaire were sent to 323 current users of the service (or those who organise the service / pay the bill on their behalf). Service users were provided with information about the proposals, a helpline number to ring and a pre-paid envelope to return their completed survey forms. An online link was provided should the respondent prefer to give their views via this method. The questionnaire was also sent via email to stakeholders for their comments and placed on the council's website.

Respondents were asked to say how the proposals (if approved) would impact on them / the person they care for and any support they would need.

A copy of the letter and questionnaire is provided at the end of this section.

160 responses were received via the consultation questionnaire, a response rate of almost 50%

Formal responses

Formal responses were received from the following organisations:

- Bolton CVS
- Age UK

Respondent Profile

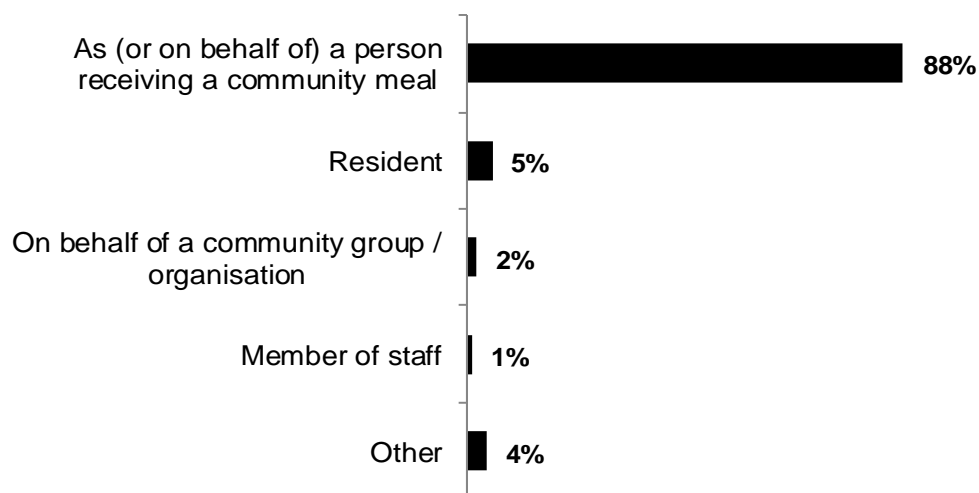
The questionnaire asked service users to answer a few questions about themselves so that the impact of the proposals on different service users can be understood. These questions were not mandatory.

Gender

- 62% of respondents were female
- 38% were male

The majority of respondents were service users or carers / family members.

Q: Please tick the box that most closely describes your interest in this issue

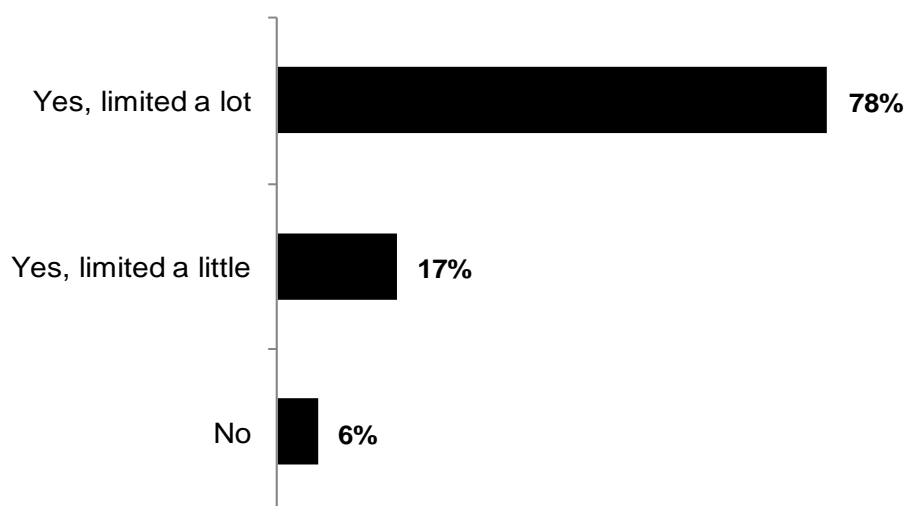


Base:145

Comments in the 'other' category included:

- Daughter and Resident
- Family member of person who receives the meals on wheels.
- I support my Mother who has deteriorating health due to dementia
- No longer receive / No service required.
- Sister in law and have power of attorney

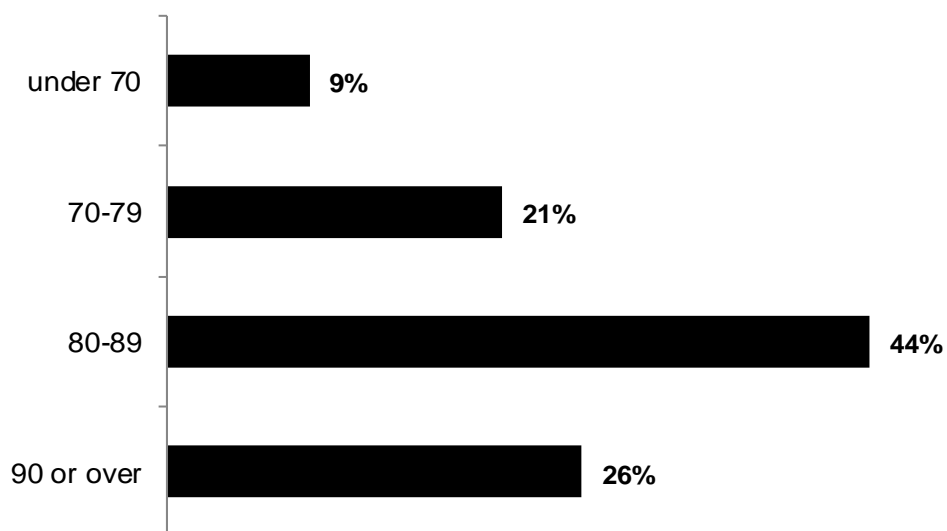
Q: Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or expected to last at least 12 months?



Base:139

The majority of respondents had health issues or disabilities.

Q: What is your age



Base:136

More than two-thirds (70%) of respondents were over the age of 80.

Responses

Impact of the proposals

Q: Please describe what (if any) impact there will be on you / the person you care for if this proposal is taken forward.

A total of 151 comments were received to this question. These comments have been coded and categorised and are shown in the table below.

Categorised comments	Number of respondents
Issues relating to health / mobility / disability / age	75
Good / hot / nutritional / healthy meals	67
Impact on quality of life	54
Relationship with drivers / staff – friendly, trustworthy, honest	41
Very happy / positive comments about the service	32
Safeguarding / safety issues	27
Impact on carer / family members	24
Against alternative providers / frozen meals	23
Live alone / loneliness	23
Financial difficulties – unable to afford alternative	22
Offers to pay more / cover costs	20
No impact / will use alternative providers	17
Not able to make food themselves (no reason given)	16
Penalising those who are old / vulnerable	16
Wouldn't have as much food / go hungry	8
Will need additional support – impact on other services / savings	6
Lack of facilities at home – freezer microwave, space etc..	6

Table includes categorised comments with 5 or more respondents in category

Each of the categories listed are explained below, with quotes to illustrate, and a service response provided.

Issues relating to health / mobility / disability / age (75 comments)

Half of all comments related to the difficulties respondents face when making a meal for themselves due to health, mobility, disability or issues relating to old age. Some respondents are not physically able to cook for themselves, for some it would be unsafe for them to cook for themselves, and for some the delivery of the meals reminds them to eat.

- *I am disabled and cannot stand up for more than two mins*
- *Mum has vascular dementia, she's unable to heat up food in the microwave*
- *I am a 91year old pensioner with Parkinson's and find it hard to cook*
- *My dad is 88 years old and his cognition is greatly impaired so he does not use cooking appliances*

- *Mr XXX is epileptic and has never cooked a meal in his life - he wouldn't know where to start*
- *This service is vital to the wellbeing of my 97year old aunt who lives in her own home but is no longer able to cook for herself. She is unable to use the cooker or the microwave in a safe manner*
- *As an 88-year-old disabled person who lives alone ... I rely on the Meals on Wheels service for the only hot meal I have in the day. I have difficulty lifting anything with my hands so there is the safety element too*
- *I do not cook for myself because of mental health problems*
- *I am too old to cope with any changes - I am visually impaired, infirm, 91 years old and an ex-serviceman*
- *She forgets to eat so this service reminds her and as it is hot on arrival she doesn't need to use the oven which can be dangerous for her*
- *My mother has problems with anxiety including being around hot pans and cooking utensils and, in my opinion, probably no longer has the strength or dexterity to handle hot pans and the household gas cooker particularly when transferring prepared food from the cooker to plates and then to the eating area*
- *My mum cannot stand in the kitchen long enough to even wait for something to warm up in the microwave, never mind make a meal!*
- *I cannot read the tiny writing on food labels to cook food safely myself and also cannot read sell by/use by dates*

Service response:

Anybody currently in receipt of community meals with health / disability / mobility issues will be eligible for reassessment – support can be tailored to individual needs.

Alternative providers of meals can offer the same level of service as the council's community meals service – e.g. a hot meal delivered to the individual on a daily basis

Good / hot / nutritional / healthy meals (67 comments)

67 out of the 151 comments submitted were positive comments relating to the quality of the food.

Respondents particularly appreciated that the food was delivered hot and that it was nutritious, healthy and good value for money.

- *The meals provide her with a hot nutritional meal each day*
- *Since I have had the meals I eat regularly and I feel stronger because of it. I have a more balanced and routine meal with vegetables. I feel healthier*
- *I know I get a good meal at least once per day*
- *The current "Meals on Wheels" offers good warm food being well balanced*
- *Both my parents rely on the community meals to provide a nutritious and balanced diet*
- *I enjoy the meals I found them very varied and healthy*
- *Meals on Wheels provide a balanced diet for someone who finds it difficult to cope on a day-to-day basis*
- *I like the convenience of a hot meal delivered and ready to eat*
- *The hot meals provided have been first class... the quality of the meals are also outstanding ... In addition the diet is beyond compare to any other that may be provided by private companies.*
- *The delivery of a lunchtime hot meal provides her with the necessary proteins etc.*
- *The meal contents now suit my taste and I worry the new company meals will not cater with my requirements as I only like traditional meals*
- *I am certain that my mother has access to at least one nutritional meal per day and should this service be withdrawn she would probably return to the 'cuppa soup' routine.*

Service response:

Alternative companies can provide a variety of nutritious hot meals with the option of frozen meals and tea-time sandwiches.

The food provided by alternative providers will follow the same environmental checks and food standards guidelines as the council service.

Impact on quality of life (54 comments)

Fifty-four respondents explained that community meals was a service that they heavily relied on and described it as a 'life-line' a 'god-send' and a 'life-saver'. They explained that it would have an impact on their quality of life if they were to no longer receive the service. Emotive language was used to describe the impact such as 'devastating' 'distressed' 'upset' 'stress' 'travesty' 'catastrophic'

- *She has until this time looked after herself and not had any support at all from anybody - this service that you provide has been a life saver for her*
- *We 100% rely on this service as I cannot leave him on his own to do shopping for food. To get a cooked meal for me and my husband delivered is a god send*
- *Firstly, I would like you to know that on arrival of this survey, my 92 year old mother broke down in tears thinking she would be unable to do her own meals*
- *Without this service I know he won't eat properly and his health and my peace of mind will suffer*
- *I was so upset when I got this letter... The Meals on Wheels encourages me to eat a little better because I have lost a lot of weight*
- *I will be quite distraught*
- *My mum has enough struggles with dementia anyway - this is a big blow now - she and our family rely on this service to ensure she has a good rounded meal every day*
- *The impact of stopping Meals on Wheels can only be described as totally devastating*
- *The impact on me will be catastrophic if the Meals on Wheels are withdrawn*
- *The loss of a ready, hot meal delivered daily by a cheerful member of staff will be a devastating blow*
- *This would have a massive impact for my dad. It is the only meal we can get him to eat*
- *Devastating - I would starve. This is such a stressful proposal that it has knocked me for six. This is my lifeline as I am on my own.*

Service response:

It is appreciated that this change can be distressing for individuals, full support and a handover to a new provider will be put in place to ensure service users and families are adequately supported at this difficult time. Alternative providers of meals can offer the same level of service as the council's community meals service – e.g. a hot meal delivered to the individual on a daily basis, some providers also offer an enhanced level of support (at a cost) if this is required

Relationship with drivers / staff – friendly, trustworthy, honest (41 comments)

A total of 41 comments related to the importance of the relationship between the service users and those who deliver the meal to them. There were numerous positive comments about the delivery staff (friendly, trustworthy) and concern that these people could lose their job. Several comments related to the way in which service users look forward to the delivery for human contact and interaction.

- *She enjoys the daily chat with the delivery people*
- *I enjoy having a hot meal delivered and the interaction with the staff*
- *I will miss the opportunity to discuss the fate of BWFC with XXX*
- *The person who delivers my meal is the only person I see during the day and is an important social contact*
- *They are all so cheerful and helpful and they are always there. Security wise it's very important as you can trust them all*
- *Her delivery man has a cheery disposition and I doubt that we could get anyone else as good and hardworking.*
- *It's the lady who brings the meal every day – I don't see other people so it's lovely to see XXX who delivers the meals. She is a lovely lady, I will miss her*
- *I wish to mention the fabulous staff who are part of this service. They know dad and they consult me where necessary. They know the service users so well it's a travesty to lose them and their service*

- *The guys who deliver the meals are friendly and brighten my mum's day as it is another happy face to see*
- *The people who deliver them are brilliant and you are not only thinking of stopping this most important service but also putting these people out of work*
- *The hot meal is delivered by cheerful, friendly, helpful staff who I can TRUST. This is very important to me*

Service response: Alternative providers will have the same checks in place as the council e.g. to ensure employees do not have any criminal records and are able to work with vulnerable people.

Guidance will be provided to service users and families to ensure that the alternative providers chosen follow a safe recruitment process and provide staff with training in adult awareness and care skills.

Council staff who are losing hours will be supported in line with council policy.

Very happy / positive comments about the service (32 comments)

Thirty-two respondents made specific comments about their satisfaction with community meals and how good the service was and not wanting any changes.

- *It is a very valuable service for many*
- *The service that has been provided by the Meals on Wheels has been excellent*
- *You provide an excellent service which would be a shame to lose*
- *Community meals is a wonderful service*
- *This service has been great for both my parents*

Service response:

Comments noted

Safeguarding / Safety issues (27 comments)

Twenty-seven respondents made specific comments about potential safeguarding / safety issues if the service was removed. There were also comments relating to the service giving carers peace of mind and 'another pair of eyes.'

- *She looks forward to it arriving and never leaves a scrap of food. It's another pair of eyes to ensure she is safe. I doubt she would be able to safely heat up a frozen meal herself*
- *It's another pair of eyes looking out for them...Are these private companies checked as they are entering the homes of vulnerable adults?*
- *Provides a vital contact point each day with the outside world and would provide an early warning if she was not able to answer the door knock that something was wrong*
- *This is an additional pair of eyes. On one occasion I received a call from community meals advising my mother was unwell*
- *The Meals on Wheels team provide a one to one contact and twice in the recent past have alerted me if she is unwell*
- *This is also outside contact for her by the delivery person and another safeguarding check*
- *If anything is wrong when they deliver, they would contact me as they have done in the past to which I am truly grateful for this service*
- *I have a key safe and community meals have my number for this, also my 'next of kin' contact details (a brother who lives 90 miles away). This would no longer be the ease with a private provider*

- *I am concerned about people who are frightened to open the door who don't like change*
- *The proposed change affects a large number of vulnerable people, and there is no evidence of due diligence from the council to assure itself that the proposed change can be implemented without placing these people at significant risk*
- *The daily food delivery also gives her the added benefit of momentary interaction with another human and that person could alert the emergency services should the need arise although we understand that this isn't their prime responsibility*

Service response:

Alternative providers should have the same checks in place as the council e.g. to ensure employees do not have any criminal records and are able to work with vulnerable people.

Some alternative providers can provide an enhanced level of support (at a cost) and can contact a nominated person if there are any concerns. They can also use key safes

Each service user can request an assessment of their care needs or a reassessment if they are already in receipt of a care package – support can be tailored to individual needs.

Impact on carers / family members (24 comments)

24 comments were in relation to the impact of the proposals on carers / family members of those currently receiving the meals.

- *Family members already organise the meals when Meals on Wheels are not available i.e. evenings, weekends and Bank Holidays. Daughter may have to go part time in order to do this*
- *My son and I have meals on wheels. It would be a great burden on him if he had to cook for me every day - even if they are microwave meals*
- *I work full time and care for my mum - am unable to travel at lunch time*
- *My father has these daily when I am at work and this means I can come to work every day knowing he has a hot meal*
- *I am the sole carer for my husband who is 85 years old. He is housebound, has severe COPD and recurrent pneumonia. We 100% rely on this service as I cannot leave him on his own to cannot do shopping for food. To get a cooked meal for me and my husband delivered is a god send*
- *Meals on Wheels gives me peace of mind that my mum receives a hot meal on the days allocated (by me) for her to have it. As mum refused carers it does take some pressure from me*
- *From a family member it also distresses me that this great service would be affected as it gives peace of mind*
- *I do all shopping. laundry etc. we eat together at weekends, but I do value some time to do 'my own thing' as I am retired and 75 years old*
- *Often changes like removing this service have unforeseen consequences and caring for someone like this already puts a big strain on families who also have other responsibilities.*

Service response:

Some alternative providers of meals can offer the same level or enhanced level of service as the council's community meals service – e.g. a hot meal delivered to the individual on a daily basis and the provision of a cold tea time meal delivered at the lunchtime.

Against alternative providers / frozen food delivery (23 comments)

23 comments related to worries around the alternative providers. Some perceived that alternative providers would provide a reduced service which may not be able to cater for their needs. There were specific concerns around timings, reliability, welfare of the service user and the quality of the food (including the fact that it may have to be heated)

- *I do not think a private firm will be as good*
- *Other companies deliver cold meals that need to be warmed up and this is not as convenient*
- *Concerns regarding reliability from a private company - timings of meal delivery could vary with different private company.*
- *It is ok that food can be delivered by i.e. Wiltshire but still have to be make this yourself*
- *Are these alternative services vetted in a way that allows us to trust them in the same way? How are the meals selected? Do the local services have the capacity to suddenly start delivering a large extra number of meals, or will the service breakdown?*
- *Some people using this service are not capable of heating a frozen meal and may therefore not eat*
- *We are concerned that outsourcing to an external company would see standards drop - have you wondered how they can do it cheaper?*
- *You seem to be pushing people into processed food everyday which we're told is not good for you*
- *How reliable would a private company be if members of their staff are suddenly off ill?*
- *Withdrawing the service means having to find another provider with flexibility and timely delivery services with customer care*
- *The service provided by a private company may be of a much-reduced quality*
- *My mother has Alzheimer's and Macular Degeneration... Her meal is delivered at a reliable time each day ... If she went onto a new supplier, would the delivery times be the same?*
- *Anxiety and worry of an outside contractor being able to provide a service with the same reliability of the community meal service. As we have seen in the past with private contractors providing a welfare service their motivations are more often budgetary rather than the welfare of the individual*
- *Depends on how the order for a meal has to be made e.g. will this be by daily telephone call and how and when payment is to be made.*

Service response:

The Council is not outsourcing this service, it will be signposting individuals and providing support to source this directly themselves.

Alternative companies can provide a variety of nutritious hot meals with the option of frozen meals and tea-time sandwiches.

A similar, if not enhanced, service can be provided by alternative suppliers.

The food provided by alternative providers will follow the same environmental checks and food standards guidelines as the council service.

Live alone / Loneliness (23 comments)

23 comments related to service users living alone and the community meals service allowing them to remain living independently. They also commented on the meal delivery providing vital interaction with another person.

- *The daily food delivery also gives her the added benefit of momentary interaction with another human*
- *I was so upset when I got this letter. I am almost eighty-eight years old and live alone*
- *This is a lifeline for this lady of 88, who has no contact with the outside world and looks forward to a hot meal and a face*
- *The person in question lives on her own and the meal provided is her only hot meal of the day. If the service is removed this will cause difficulty for the person. The person concerned has dementia and cannot look after herself without help*
- *My dad still lives independently. He is 88 years old and his cognition is greatly impaired so he does not use cooking appliances. The only substantial meal that he has is a hot lunch delivered 5 times a week currently. He has no one to help him. I visit him once a month from Somerset and I am his only source of support.*
- *Anything less than the current excellent service of ready to eat hot meals being delivered would have a major impact, the person I care for lives alone and would probably have to move into permanent residential care*
- *As a very elderly person living alone, who is completely house-bound, I rely totally on this service for a daily hot meal*
- *It is also delivered by some friendly staff and Mum appreciates their kindness and banter, for some people this will be the only contact in a very lonely day*

Service response:

Alternative providers of meals can offer the same level of service as the council's community meals service – e.g. a hot meal delivered to the individual on a daily basis to allow the service user to remain living independently in their own home.

Financial difficulties – unable to afford alternative (22 comments)

22 comments related to worry of the increased cost of alternative provision, especially from those who are unable to have frozen/microwave meals so would have to pay a higher charge for a cooked meal delivered to the door. There was also a concern that the private providers could increase their costs. Some respondents said they'd have to reduce the number of days they have the service to be able to afford it.

- *The proposed extra cost would impact significantly on my budget*
- *I cannot afford £6.60 per meal but I do not have a freezer or microwave oven.*
- *If there is an increase in payment it will mean either my mother missing out on meals or myself having to foot the additional costs. My wife and I are on minimum wage with less than 35 hours a week combined. Where are we supposed to find extra cash so that my mother does not go hungry?*
- *Can the council guarantee there will not be massive cost increases in the future by these independent providers or reductions of the quantities in the meals?*
- *My Grandmother is 90 years old and has three carer visits per day and one meals on wheels (lunchtime). She cannot reheat frozen meals and an extra carer visit would be costly*
- *We as a family have a package of care for my mother most of which is chargeable and very costly thus we would not be able to afford prices with a private company*

- *If the cost is increased, I would have to reduce the number of meals from 5 per week to 3 per week*

Service response:

Each service user will be offered an assessment to work out what their on-going needs are and if required will receive support to source an alternative.

Assistance can be given to purchase the equipment needed to keep meals frozen and reheat them if this is required.

It is a competitive market so costs from private providers should remain good value for money.

Offers to pay more / cover cost (20 comments)

There were a number of respondents (20) who offered to pay more to keep community meals. Some offered to pay the full cost of the meal to keep the council service. There was also a suggestion to subcontract rather than discontinue the service.

- *We will cover any increase in cost of meals*
- *I would much prefer to continue with the meals, even if the cost goes up*
- *I would not support this proposal but would pay for any price change*
- *I would prefer for the contract to remain with Bolton Council, and I would be prepared to pay a higher price for the meal, more in line with the 'real' cost to yourselves*
- *We would be prepared to pay the full cost to maintain this valuable community service*
- *I would rather pay the council the full or real cost of £7.85 per meal or more in order for the withdraw not to take place*
- *I know she would be happy to pay the full cost and so would we. It is well worth the full price and delivered to the door too*
- *We would rather see an increase in the cost of the service rather than it be withdrawn entirely and then encounter the additional anxiety and worry of an outside contractor being able to provide a service with the same reliability of the community meal service*
- *If the commercial service is so much cheaper, why don't you just subcontract? (Thus securing an even greater cost reduction by buying in bulk?)*

Service response:

A greater charge for a council service would result in an estimated drop-off by at least half, this would see income fall, and whilst food costs would also drop, the service would require a greater subsidy than now – resulting in greater budget pressure for the council. This would result in further increase costs to the customer.

No impact / will use alternative providers (17 comments)

Seventeen respondents didn't feel there would be an impact on them. Some because they no longer used the service and others because they would arrange to receive meals from another provider.

- *I would take my custom somewhere else*
- *She cannot cook her own meals - would consider alternative 'meals on wheels'*
- *I am able to make arrangements to replace them - this would be totally satisfactory*
- *We feel that it will not make much of a difference if they are no longer available as we can arrange other alternatives*
- *No impact to be fair as "Meals on Wheels" was a short term arrangement over approx 3 weeks and terminated 10 days ago.*

Service response:

Comments noted

Not able to make food themselves (16 comments)

Sixteen respondents explained that they (or the people they cared for) were not able to make a meal for themselves, but didn't specifically explain the reasons why.

- *I am unable to cook*
- *I like a hot meal delivered as I don't use my oven*
- *She cannot cook her own meals*
- *If I didn't receive my hot meal I would be unable to cook myself a meal*
- *I am unable to use a microwave*
- *It would be considerably difficult for me to cook a meal every day of the week*

Service response:

Alternative providers of meals can offer the same level of service as the council's community meals service – e.g. a hot meal delivered to the individual on a daily basis.

Penalising those who are old / vulnerable (16 comments)

Sixteen respondents felt that the proposals punished the most vulnerable members of society and that the council should be prioritising support for them.

- *Surely some services e.g. health care, transport and caring for elderly are more important than profit and SHOULD be subsidized out of local taxes and rates*
- *I fully understand the need for local councils to make cuts but surely at some point enough is enough, otherwise the old will be left with little alternative but residential care or hospitalisation and even greater burden on the council and society as a whole.*
- *Looks like another hit on the elderly and vulnerable in our community - the way things are going to the council will not be happy until there's no social care left. This affects the most vulnerable in our society will be devastating. The majority have paid taxes for most of their lives and not they need help to live independently it slowly being removed.*
- *The people that use this service have paid into the government for the whole of their working lives they have a right to access this service.*
- *I know Bolton may be one of the only authorities to continue with this service, but why should we not stand up and be a beacon and say we look after our elderly, frail and disabled because we care and they are part of the Bolton family.*
- *I am pretty disgusted that Bolton council are considering/proposing changes to the current services which is mainly offered to the ill elderly disabled or less fortunate in our community ... I do feel subsidy must continue with this vital service for our elderly and infirm and cost cutting should be looked at elsewhere within Bolton council*

Service response:

By removing the subsidy for this universal service, the council can ensure we can continue to provide eligible services targeted to the most vulnerable in our community.

Wouldn't have as much food / go hungry (8 comments)

Eight people explained that if the proposals were approved they wouldn't have as much food and would go hungry

- *I would not have a cooked meal during the week*
- *I would not be having a hot meal at lunch 2 days a week. Due to my weight loss I rely on these meals to help me sustain my weight*

- *I will not get my meals and will go hungry*
- *People will go hungry putting the strain on other services*

Service response:

Some alternative providers of meals can offer the same level of service as the council's community meals service – e.g. a hot meal delivered to the individual on a daily basis.

Will need additional support – impact on other services / savings (6 comments)

There were six comments relating to the perceived increased need for support (e.g. carers visits) if the proposals go ahead which could impact on other services and reduce any savings achieved.

- *Any saving from the withdrawal of this service would be outweighed by increased cost of social care*
- *People will lose their jobs and more people will go hungry putting the strain on other services*
- *All this will do is save you money in one department to spend more in another when service users need to claim financial help*
- *The person I care for lives alone and would probably have to move into permanent residential care, my understanding is that the council would have to provide at least some of the funding for this which I am sure would be more expensive to the council than £3.26 a day*
- *She would be neglected, then depression, then hospital!!!!*
- *I have asked their care provider to give me an idea how much extra it would cost for them to cook/microwave meals. Because of the amount my parents pay at present, this would probably mean an increased contribution from you, the council, negating any benefit from stopping Meals on Wheels*

Service response:

Each service user will be offered an assessment to work out what their on-going needs are.

By removing the subsidy for this universal service, the council can ensure we can continue to provide eligible services targeted to the most vulnerable in our community-

Lack of facilities at home – freezer, microwave, space etc (6 comments)

Some service users (6) explained that they didn't have facilities to freeze and re-heat meals at home or did not have the kitchen space to house these products.

- *Please note I do not have a Freezer and therefore Frozen Foods are not an option*
- *I cannot afford £6.60 per meal but I do not have a freezer or microwave oven*
- *I would be unable to cook myself a meal or store a frozen meal as I do not have a freezer*
- *I only have a small kitchen and small fridge with not enough room to store chilled meals*
- *He doesn't have a freezer large enough for a week's meals, nor does he have a microwave to prepare them in I advised him that these may be provided for him, but he is reluctant as he isn't confident in using one*
- *She does not have sufficient storage space for pre-prepared meals*

Service response:

Assistance can be given to purchase the equipment needed to keep meals frozen and reheat them if this is required.

Support

Q: If the proposals are approved, how can we support you through the changes?

A total of 126 comments were received. These comments have been coded and categorised and are shown in the table below.

Categorised comments	Number of respondents
Provide information on alternative suppliers	61
Keep the service / don't change	27
Ensure a hot meal is delivered	20
Impact on quality of life	15
Ensure specific needs are addressed	14
Give sufficient notice / keep informed	14
Keep the service by increasing the cost / subcontract	9
Provide reassurance on supplier	7

Table includes categorised comments with 5 or more respondents in category

Each of the categories listed are explained below, with quotes to illustrate and a service response provided.

Provide information on alternative suppliers (61 comments)

Respondents requested support in terms of information on alternative providers.

- *My family and I would need to understand alternative providers and costs*
- *Provide a cost effective alternative - to ensure I get at least one hot meal a day*
- *Signpost me to companies in Bolton who provide hot meals or frozen meals*
- *Give me the other companies' names, telephone numbers and email addresses so that my daughter can find me an alternative service*
- *Recommend a reliable and trustworthy provider*
- *As stated in the previous section my sister MUST have a hot meal delivered each day. If your current service is terminated it is vital that an equal service is provided on a daily basis and that is clearly your responsibility to ensure that happens*

Service response:

A list of suitable alternative companies supplying meals will be provided to service users.

Keep the service / don't change (27 comments)

There were specific requests to withdraw the proposal and to keep the service as it is:

- *We can't cope with the changes and hope you will vote to continue services as they are at present*
- *Ideally be the council that keeps this service.*
- *Please don't make this change and carry on with the existing excellent and socially responsible system*

- *By NOT changing it*
- *Don't implement the proposals and look at innovative ways to build and retain the service*

Service response:

The cost of delivering the hot meals to lunch clubs and residents described above is £7.85 per meal. The current charge for each meal is £4.59, meaning a subsidy of £3.26 per meal is being provided currently. Budget pressures mean that the council can no longer retain this subsidy

Ensure a hot meal is delivered (20 comments)

Twenty respondents explained it was important that a hot meal is still delivered to them:

- *Ensure a daily hot meal is delivered*
- *Provide a cost effective alternative - to ensure I get at least one hot meal a day*
- *Provide a hot, cooked meal during the week*
- *He must have a system that ensures he has a hot meal every day - otherwise he just eats biscuits and bread*

Service response:

Some alternative providers of meals can offer the same level of service as the council's community meals service – e.g. a hot meal delivered to the individual on a daily basis.

Impact on quality of life (15 comments)

Similar to comments in the 'impact' section of the report, respondents explained how distressed and upset they are about the proposals and how they would impact on their lives:

- *I feel very sad about this as both myself and my husband have got used to each and every one of the kind staff who a present deliver our meals*
- *This would cause worry and concern for me and my family. I'm 83 years old and do not really like change - I enjoy interaction with the delivery person as this may be the only person I see all day.*
- *The impact of any change on vulnerable people can be very stressful, just reading this letter caused distress for him. This service has/is a life-saver, please keep it going.*
- *Do not approve the proposal! People will die, but then I don't think you care.*
- *Any change in the service in my view would only reduce my standard of living*

Service response:

Each service user will be offered an assessment to work out what their on-going needs are.

Some alternative providers of meals can offer the same level of service as the council's community meals service – e.g. a hot meal delivered to the individual on a daily basis.

Ensure specific needs are addressed (14 comments)

Some respondents requested specific requirements of any new supplier due to personal needs or medical conditions:

- *I require soft food options and would need confirmation that these are available*
- *I hope the council would ensure or oversee all aspects through the changes, the main aspects being a) the meals would be hot and not frozen, b) the meals would arrive consistently at a regular daily time. c) The new providers would not take advantage of the withdraw of the council from the meals on wheels service and allow them to reduce the service or increase prices greater than £7.85 that the council 'or more' than the council did consider charging. d) That the new providers would not reduce the meals in any way that I have not noted here, i.e. size and nature of meals - any 'major' increase in price of each meal, not to deliver frozen meals over a daily basis or even deliver frozen meals AT ALL*
- *My dad can hardly walk (Diabetes) so he would need support at lunch time to make a meal. Currently he manages to put a small tray and his plate and knife and fork at the side of him so just transfers this onto the tray when it arrives*
- *Hot pureed meals delivered 7 days a week*
- *Use same provider of Appetito meals, offer same service of hot meals and call if no answer at the door. If the new provider can also offer a sandwich delivery for tea times is a very good selling point*
- *The service user would need help to identify a suitable provider who is able to deliver a hot meal at a regular time and with meal options that are compatible with her medical condition*

Service response:

Some alternative suppliers can provide specific meals for customers with special dietary requirements for religious or medical purposes.

Give sufficient notice / keep informed (14 comments)

Respondents asked to be kept informed at all stages and hoped that the transfer over to a new supplier could be easy and seamless.

- *Keep me informed of said changes and the alternatives of a HOT meal service*
- *I have no problem as long as the change-over to a new supplier is seamless and I am not left without food*
- *My Mother suffers from anxiety and is vulnerable to change, however small. If there is a change of provider, there will need to be a great deal of support to ensure that she understands the changes and how they will impact on her. A leaflet with information is of little use*
- *If the measures do go ahead - then they need to be done seamlessly*
- *Keep me informed at all stages, as to what alternatives there are available and how quickly and easily these changes would be put in place.*

Service response:

A detailed implementation plan for the transition of the hot meal delivery will be developed prior to the service ending. Information about alternative suppliers will be provided in suitable formats.

Increase the cost / subcontract (9 comments)

There were suggestions from respondents to subcontract or tender the service or to increase the price of the meal so that the council can continue to provide community meals and maintain standards of the service.

- *Subcontract to one or more of these providers, thus taking on the burden of ensuring that the staff involved have been vetted*
- *I would recommend the council tenders out the service with clear contractual relationships and expectations. This way standards can be maintained, and cost increases contractually limited to RPI/CPI. Payments can be made directly to the provider by the citizen to save the council the cost / bureaucracy of managing the system but give protection to citizens to give recourse to address poor service... The tender process could also be done via a 'preferred provider framework' to prevent a monopoly being created. I would urge you to follow this approach as whilst I acknowledge the financial burdens placed on the council I believe my suggestion would provide citizen protection whilst protecting the council's financial challenges*
- *We prefer to stay with you as of now - and will pay the increase in charges for hot meals daily*
- *If you were to carry on we would be happy to pay more*

Service response:

A greater charge for a council service would result in an estimated drop-off by at least half, this would see income fall, and whilst food costs would also drop, the service would require a greater subsidy than now – resulting in greater budget pressures for the council.

Provide reassurance on alternative supplier (7 comments)

Some respondents requested that we provide reassurance on alternative suppliers –DBS checked etc.)

- *The companies assigned to provide Meals on Wheels need to be scrutinised so they deliver the same level or service that the Council deliver now and the meals are of similar quality*
- *We'd need help to find a good quality, replacement service and then monitoring to ensure the service maintains its standards*
- *As much information as possible to stop the great worry of needing to start looking for an alternative. Whilst we understand the difficult situation with budgeting, we feel that the council has a duty of care to provide/ensure that frail, elderly people are not left malnourished*
- *The Council must guarantee that, if a new provider is found, that the service is not diminished. The Council must also guarantee that the new company can cope with preparing and providing a greater number of meals. Equally, that the meals are delivered at an appropriate time and that time is maintained.*

Service response:

Support will be provided to the service user to assist them in choosing a provider that undertakes safe recruitment and provides training in adult care.

Other comments

Other topics with less than five comments included:

- *Provide equipment e.g. larger freezer and a single button, pre-programmed microwave (4 comments)*

- Increase number of carer visits (4 comments)
- I / family will find our own alternative (4 comments)
- Give us more money towards paying for care / food (3 comments)

Bolton CVS Response

This proposal could potentially have an impact on the community and voluntary sector due to an increase in isolation from those who previously received this service. Although the service provides very limited contact with the beneficiaries it provided someone to check in on people and some contact.

Nutrition and hydration in older people is a key priority across Greater Manchester in ageing well. Consideration needs to be given to this and how individuals can be supported to ensure a suitable alternative is put in place with enough advance warning of any change to allow individuals to adjust. Although the Equalities and Impact Assessment does not highlight any concerns against race or religion - consideration does need to be given to the diversity of food available from private providers taking into account religious and other dietary requirements.

These changes will potentially have an impact on Bolton Carers Support who may see an increase in the number of carers needing support. It could also impact on carers and lead to increased demand on carers which cannot be met and could lead to breakdown of caring.

Work collaboratively with the community and voluntary sector so that groups can also communicate with and support those affected. Recognise the importance of voluntary sector provision in the light of these reductions in services, including services for older people and Bolton Carers Support and the need for sufficient capacity within these organisations to prevent deterioration of health leading to an increased need for health and social care.

Clear and timely communication is vital and support with arranging alternatives so that people do not feel unsettled due to the change, including reassurance of the appropriateness of the alternatives being provided. Where possible Carers should be included when this information is provided. There is reference to provision of equipment where necessary - this offer needs to be made clear.

Written and verbal information should be included with consideration for those for whom English is not a first language and for those with sensory impairments. Communication should include any provision provided by the community and voluntary sector - after first checking that this provision has capacity to take new participants. Individuals should be followed up to ensure that they have an appropriate alternative in place.

Service response:

Some alternative suppliers can provide specific meals for customers with special dietary requirements

Each service user will be offered a face-to-face meeting to discuss needs and if required support to find an alternative supplier.

The implementation plan will be devised with the support of VCSE providers to ensure service users and carers can be supported appropriately and communication needs are addressed.

Age UK Response

Age UK Bolton recognises the importance of and champions the need for good nutrition and hydration for older people to remain healthy and independent. Indeed we are a partner in the successful Greater Manchester Nutrition and Hydration programme along with other local Age UKs and Public Health teams in Rochdale, Oldham, Stockport, Bury and here locally in Bolton. The programme aims to identify older people who are or who may be at risk of becoming malnourished and provides information and practical tips and support on how to ensure that they are eating and drinking well enough. Most people want to remain in their own homes and retain as much independence for as long as possible. We are only too aware however that many people in their later years struggle with daily living tasks such as shopping, cooking and even basic food preparation (1 in 3 people over 85 struggle with 5 or more basic daily living tasks).

Ensuring that vulnerable older people can benefit from a hot nutritious meal every day is vitally important. We understand that the Council currently delivers 1,700 hot community meals to around 300 older people in Bolton but is now reluctantly having to reconsider the future of the service as it can no longer afford the level of subsidy necessary to provide the meals at an affordable and competitive price and is out to consultation.

It's not important who provides the meals. What is important is that they: are good quality and nutritious; meet the highest food hygiene standards; are delivered by properly screened, trained and empathetic staff and that they are affordable and competitively priced. There are a number of commercial providers who meet these requirements and already providing a service to hundreds more older people in Bolton and across the country. They offer a variety of choice of menu options and prices.

If the Council does have to go down this route then it will be important for them to support and hand hold the older people affected through the transition to commercial providers and not simply provide information of contact details. We understand that this is the Council's intention and that other support measures may be available. We look forward to learning more about how this will happen and the nature of that support. If so, our free Information and Advice service will be able to clarify accurately should we receive any queries or concerns. It may be that we can also help people make applications for Attendance Allowance if they are eligible and haven't already done so.

Food is often more enjoyable when shared with others and the social companionship equally important to the nutrition. Our charity Age UK Bolton, also has a network of lunch clubs and lunch groups in a range of community venues across the borough and we would be delighted to welcome people to join us there. The cost of lunch and other refreshments is comparable to the cost of the delivery service and includes companionship.

Service response:

A detailed implementation plan for the transition of the hot meal delivery will be developed prior to the service ending and the Council welcomes the opportunity to work in partnership with Age UK and other VCSE providers to ensure the wider wellbeing of our service users and carers is addressed.



Directorate of People Services

Income and Assessment Team

1st Floor

Town Hall, Bolton BL1 1RU

01204 332170

www.bolton.gov.uk/consultations

Consultation re: Community Meals

We are contacting you about the community meals '*Meals on Wheels*' service that you or a person you care for currently receives.

Due to budget pressures, we are having to look at doing things differently and we need information on how proposed changes to the service could impact you.

We are looking at withdrawing the meal delivery service and supporting customers to find alternative providers.

Please be assured, no decisions have been made yet. At this stage we just want your views - your feedback will help councillors make decisions in the full knowledge of the impact on you and will help identify any additional measures we need to put in place to support you.

Please complete the enclosed consultation form and return it to us as soon as possible and before the **4th of September 2019** using the pre-paid envelope provided.

Background:

Customers currently pay £4.59 per meal, but the actual cost of delivering a hot meal to you is £7.85. This means that the council is currently subsidising each meal at a cost of £3.26.

We did consider increasing the charge for the meal to the full £7.85, but this would make the service more expensive than private providers.

There are a range of companies in Bolton which charge in the region of £6.60 for a hot meal and pudding delivered direct to your home. Frozen meals can also be delivered at a cost ranging from £3 to £6 per meal.

Please be assured that if the proposals are approved by the council, we will help you find an alternative provider. If required, we will also offer assistance with the equipment needed to store and reheat frozen meals.

If you would like help to complete the questionnaire please phone **01204 332170** to speak to one of our officers or email consultation@bolton.gov.uk

If you would like an easy read version of the questionnaire or in another format please contact the number above. Alternatively, you can complete the survey form online at www.bolton.gov.uk/consultations

If you would like to read the full report that went to Cabinet, please go to www.bolton.gov.uk/consultations

The council's Cabinet will consider the outcomes of the consultation in October 2019 and, if the proposals are approved, we would look to have everyone transferred over to a new supplier by no later than end of January 2020.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the proposals.

Yours sincerely



Rachel Tanner,
Assistant Director Adult Services
Directorate of People Services

Community Meals: Have your say

Background

Bolton Council is reviewing its community meals '*Meals on Wheels*' service that provides hot meals to residents who find it difficult to cook for themselves.

You currently pay £4.59 to receive your meal, whereas the **real** cost of delivering a hot meal to you is £7.85 per meal. Bolton Council is therefore currently subsidising each meal at a cost of £3.26 per meal. This is no longer sustainable due to financial budget pressures.

The proposal

It is proposed to withdraw the hot meal delivery service provided by the council and signpost you to an alternative provider if required.

There is a range of companies around the Bolton area which charge in the region of £6.60 for a hot meal and pudding delivered direct to your home. Frozen meals (for reheating as needed) can also be delivered free at a cost ranging from £3 to £6.

If the proposal is taken forward, the council would provide support to help you find an alternative provider, where necessary, and assistance with equipment needed to keep meals frozen and reheat them (if this is required).

Any information you give us will be held securely in line with our retention schedule and privacy policy, which can be found under 'privacy notices' on the Bolton Council website:
www.bolton.gov.uk/data-protection-freedom-information/privacy-notice

Impact of the proposal

Please describe what (if any) impact there will be on you / the person you care if this proposal is taken forward

Support

If the proposals are approved, how can we support you through the changes?

About you

So we can understand how our proposals affect different service users, we would be grateful if you could answer the following questions. Please feel free miss out any you don't want to answer.

Please tick the box that most closely describes your interest in this issue

- ☐ As (or on behalf of) a person receiving a community meal
☐ On behalf of a community group / organisation
☐ Member of Staff
☐ Resident
☐ Other (*please state in box below*)

What is your age?

Are you?

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or expected to last at least 12 months?

- ☐ Yes, limited a lot ☐ Yes, limited a little ☐ No

What is your postcode?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return your completed form in the pre-paid envelope provided. You do not need a stamp.

Equality Impact Assessment

Title of report or proposal:
Review of Community Meals and Catering Service – post consultation report

Directorate:	People and Place Directorates
Section:	
Date:	4 th November 2019

Public sector bodies need to be able to evidence that they have given due regard to the impact and potential impact on all people with ‘protected characteristics’ in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the council has a general duty to have **due regard** to the need to:

1. **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
2. **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
3. **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

By completing the following questions the three parts of the equality duty will be consciously considered as part of the decision-making process.

Details of the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment must also be included in the main body of the report.

1. Describe in summary the aims, objectives and purpose of the proposal, including desired outcomes.

In February 2019, the council approved further savings options of £23.5m for the 2019-21 period. This report sets out the final proposals, following consultation, of a review of the Community Meals and Catering Service within the People Directorate in response. If agreed, the proposals would make a contribution of £299,760 to the budget option identified as “Review of the Community Meals Service” identified in February 2019 budget report to Council.

The Catering Service provides a number of services across Bolton; a full kitchen service to provide meals, drinks and snacks in 3 care homes; the delivery of hot meals at lunchtimes, the delivery of meals at lunchtime to 3 lunch clubs operating at Extra Care housing schemes and the delivery of lunchtime meals to Horwich Tuesday Club. The Catering Service also delivers services under a service level agreement paid by Bolton Cares Ltd. Bolton Cares have served its notice on this service level agreement contract, which will end in November.

In July 2019 the Cabinet approved a report setting out proposals to changes to the service to reflect the challenges faced, for consultation with staff, elected members, trade unions, service users and other relevant stakeholders. The recommended option was to end the hot meal delivery service and the food service to day centres, and remove other meals subsidies, to bring Bolton Council in line with the majority of other councils in the North West.

During consultation, Bolton Cares Ltd advised the council that the weekend service in its day care provision could be ceasing due to underutilisation, and they were due to consult their users, with an implementation date of 11th November 2019. This would mean that there would no longer be any requirement for transport by the SNT service to these services at weekends. A small number of Bolton Cares service users will be affected, and Bolton Cares will be consulting individuals on alternative ways of meeting their needs.

There were some key issues raised during consultation which include;

- Availability, cost, and quality of alternative provision options, including dietary requirements;
- Difficulties faced by service users when making a meal for themselves;
- Concern about service users’ welfare and safety in future;
- The loss of interaction between service users and delivery staff;
- The service user’s voice and accessing information on alternative providers;
- Issues relating to terms and conditions;
- Potential to mitigate lost hours in SNT service by reviewing current provision and options;
- TUPE queries

The post consultation report addresses the key issues arising, with management responses and puts forward the final proposals for approval by the Cabinet.

The proposals indicate a potential overall reduction in the Community Meals and Catering service staff and Business Support establishment of an estimated 12.16 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts, of which 2.86 FTE are currently vacant and 2.54 FTE are eligible for TUPE from the 24.52 FTE staff establishment. Due to vacant posts held and a number of VER / VR requests received (without prejudice), it is hoped the impact of these reductions will be minimised if approved.

The report also sets out the impact of these proposals on the Social Needs Transport service within the Place Directorate, which delivers the community meals. 22 Drivers/Attendants in the Social Needs Transport Service staff establishment within the Place Directorate are affected, indicating a reduction of 258.45 operational hours per week. The impact of the reduction in hours equates to 6.99 FTE.

2. Is this a new policy / function / service or review of existing one?

This is a review of an existing service.

3. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the proposal?

The main stakeholders are;

- Staff
- Service users who have meals provided / delivered by Bolton Council Catering Meals Service
- Carers of those who receive the service
- Groups representing older people
- Bolton Cares
- Trade Unions
- Key stakeholders

The report setting out proposals to changes to the service formed the basis for consultation with trade unions, staff, elected members, service users and their carers' and key stakeholders.

4. In summary, what are the anticipated (positive or negative) impacts of the proposal?

The anticipated positive impacts are that if agreed the final proposal;

- Will deliver the required savings of £299,760.
- Will enable the council service to respond to the reduction in income from Bolton Cares.
- Align Bolton with the service provided by 87% of councils in the North West.
- A number of staff have been identified as being eligible for TUPE to Bolton Cares Ltd.

The anticipated negative impacts are that if agreed the final proposal will result in a potential overall reduction in the Community Meals and Catering service staff and Business Support establishment of an estimated 12.16 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts, of which 2.86 FTE are currently vacant and 2.54 FTE are eligible for TUPE from the 24.52 FTE staff establishment. Due to vacant posts held and a number of VER / VR requests received (without prejudice), it is hoped the impact of these reductions will be minimised if approved.

In addition, 22 Drivers/Attendants in Social Needs Transport Service staff establishment within the Place Directorate are affected, indicating a reduction of 258.45 operational hours per week. The impact of the reduction in hours equates to 6.99 FTE.

The potential reduction in staff posts will be managed and supported in line with council policy.

A summary of the key consultation issues raised from staff and trade unions are set out in Appendix 4 and 5 of the report, and a summary of key consultation issues raised from service users and stakeholders are set out in Appendix 6 of the report. Management responses are detailed within the report and appendices.

The anticipated negative impacts on service users is the increase in the costs of meals, the change in service provider, or the service user's decision to stop the meal delivery.

5. What, if any, cumulative impact could the proposal have?

None identified.

6. With regard to the stakeholders identified above and the diversity groups set out below:

Consider:

- How to avoid, reduce or minimise negative impact (if you identify unlawful discrimination, including victimisation and harassment, you must stop the action and take advice immediately).
- How to **advance equality of opportunity**. This means considering the need to:
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people with protected characteristics due to having that characteristic.
 - Take steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics that are different from people who do not have that characteristic
 - Encourage protected groups to participate in public life and in any other activity where participation is disproportionately low
- How to **foster good relations**. This means considering the need to:
 - Tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

	List any adverse impacts identified from data or engagement	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why	Please detail what actions you will take to remedy any identified adverse impact i.e. actions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
Race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality, and caste, and includes refugees and migrants; and gypsies and travellers)	<p>The proposals if agreed, would result in an increase in the cost of meals and the change of provider to service users. It would be the decision of the service user if they wanted to continue using this service.</p> <p>The proposals, if agreed would result in a reduction in the staff establishment by 12.16 FTE plus a reduction in hours equivalent to 6.99 FTE in Social Needs Transport.</p>	With regard to all the groups identified in this assessment, it should be noted that this proposal is driven by reductions in Local Government funding, that result in a potential for fundamental changes to how services are delivered.	<p>These proposals have been subject to consultation with key service users, staff, stakeholders and trade unions, and this analysis has been tested during the consultation.</p> <p>Subject to approval of the final proposals, staff in a redundancy situation will be managed and supported in line with council policy.</p>

	List any adverse impacts identified from data or engagement	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why	Please detail what actions you will take to remedy any identified adverse impact i.e. actions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
	<p>From the consultation with staff, trade unions, service users and stakeholders no adverse impacts were identified on grounds of race. It was raised during consultation that consideration should be given to the provision of written and verbal information for those for whom English is not a first language.</p> <p>No differential impact is anticipated on grounds of race.</p>	<p>The fundamental driver for this review is that the council needs to make savings; this is a non-statutory service, and the overall cost is being heavily subsidised by the council. Whilst it is well regarded by service users, it does not represent value for money.</p> <p>The closure of hot meal delivery service and food service to day centres and removal of other meal subsidies has been seen in other local authorities. With Bolton Council being one of the few remaining councils in the North West of England providing this subsidy.</p>	<p>To ensure compliance with Regulation 14 of the Health and Social Care Act 2008, the provision of meals and drinks at Darley Court, Laburnum Lodge and Wilfred Geere will continue.</p> <p>Should the final proposals be approved, the council will support service users through the transition process and ensure that an alternative provision can be purchased directly by users. The transition process will be managed through an implementation plan. The detailed implementation plans will take full due regard to the issues raised in consultation, to ensure that people receive a good quality and affordable alternative service that can offer increased choice of meals.</p> <p>Due diligence has been completed to ensure that an alternative hot meal service could be provided in Bolton. Confirmation has been provided by a major national provider that they wish to operate in Bolton. In addition, a number of local providers in neighbourhoods have expressed an interest in providing a service.</p> <p>These alternative providers have advised</p>

	List any adverse impacts identified from data or engagement	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why	Please detail what actions you will take to remedy any identified adverse impact i.e. actions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
			<p>that their approach is akin to that of the council service. Some alternative providers can offer the same level of service as the council's community meals service.</p> <p>The full implementation plan includes the development of information on the council's website and those of partners to signpost people to alternative providers.</p> <p>Each service user will be offered an assessment to consider their individual and ongoing needs are. These assessments can be held with service users and their families.</p> <p>The implementation plan will be devised with the support of VCSE providers to ensure service users and carers can be supported appropriately and communication needs are addressed.</p> <p>Individuals will have a follow-up to check on their welfare and that they have sourced an alternative or are self-sufficient in this area.</p> <p>Support, where necessary will be provided and assistance, if needed, with</p>

	List any adverse impacts identified from data or engagement	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why	Please detail what actions you will take to remedy any identified adverse impact i.e. actions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
			<p>equipment to keep meals frozen and reheat them.</p> <p>Staff who are affected by these proposals will be managed and supported in line with council policy.</p> <p>A number of posts have been identified as being eligible for TUPE to Bolton Cares. Some expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy have been received during consultation, these will be considered for approval in accordance with council policy and procedures.</p>
<p>Religion or belief (this includes any religion with a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief. The Act also covers lack of religion or belief)</p>	<p>From the consultation with staff, trade unions, service users and stakeholders' concerns were noted to the diversity of food available from alternative providers considering religious and other dietary requirements.</p> <p>However, we do not anticipate that this of itself raises potential for significant differential impact on the grounds of religion or belief.</p>	See comments under Race.	<p>See comments under Race.</p> <p>Some alternative suppliers can provide specific meals for customers with special dietary requirements for religious or medical purposes. These suppliers would have accreditation in relation to nutrition and hygiene.</p>

	List any adverse impacts identified from data or engagement	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why	Please detail what actions you will take to remedy any identified adverse impact i.e. actions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
<p>Disability (a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that due to the nature of the service and the support it provides, there are service users who will be disabled (either a physical or mental disability, including frailty and those who may be vulnerable). Of these, a proportion may be unable to prepare a meal or make alternative arrangements and/or have limited social interaction.</p> <p>It is however noted that we do not anticipate that this of itself raises potential for significant differential impact on the grounds of disability.</p> <p>From the consultation, concerns were noted regarding the difficulties service users may face when making a meal for themselves, the impact on their quality of life, the loss of human interaction, their wellbeing and safety, and concern that they would be unable to continue to live independently.</p>	<p>See comments under Race.</p>	<p>See comments under Race.</p> <p>Each service user will be offered an assessment to consider their individual and ongoing needs are. These assessments can be held with service users and their families.</p> <p>The implementation plan will consider any communication needs.</p> <p>The alternative hot and cold meal providers have advised that their approach is akin to that of the council service. Staff are DBS checked, references taken and training in adult care is provided. They will liaise with family as requested in their plans if they are concerned for welfare of services users, as well as having contact with social workers and assisting to raise emergency services if needed.</p> <p>The implementation plan and transition will include a review of wider welfare needs of individuals and opportunities to address social isolation for vulnerable people. It is acknowledged that social interaction with the provider is important, but this should not be a solution to social isolation.</p> <p>Therefore, in partnership with VCSE</p>

	List any adverse impacts identified from data or engagement	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why	Please detail what actions you will take to remedy any identified adverse impact i.e. actions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
			providers' offer of connecting individuals to community assets will be paramount to the individual conversations as part of the implementation process.
Sex / Gender	<p>There is a potential differential impact in the People Directorate service for female members of staff, as a high proportion of the affected staff cohort are women.</p> <p>There is no differential impact on the service users on the grounds of sex/gender.</p>	In line with generalised trends of employment within the People Directorate, there are more women affected by these proposals. This reflects wider social pressures and historic issues relating to the gender balance in care and support work.	See comments under Race.
Gender reassignment / Gender identity (a person who's deeply felt and individual experience of gender may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth, they may or may not propose to, start or complete a process to change their gender. A person does not need to be under medical supervision to be protected)	See comments under Race.	See comments under Race.	See comments under Race.
Age (people of all ages)	It is acknowledged that due to the nature of the service and the support it provides, the majority of service users will be older adults.	See comments under Race.	<p>See comments under Race.</p> <p>Each service user will be offered an assessment to consider their individual and ongoing needs are. These assessments can be held with service users and their families.</p>

	List any adverse impacts identified from data or engagement	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why	Please detail what actions you will take to remedy any identified adverse impact i.e. actions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
	<p>Of these, a proportion may be unable to prepare a meal or make alternative arrangements and/or have limited social interaction.</p> <p>It is, however, noted that we do not anticipate that this of itself raises potential for significant differential impact on the grounds of age.</p> <p>From the consultation, concerns were noted regarding the difficulties service users may face when making a meal for themselves, the impact on their quality of life, the loss of human interaction, their wellbeing and safety, and concern that they would be unable to continue to live independently.</p>		<p>The alternative hot and cold meal providers have advised that their approach is akin to that of the council service. Staff are DBS checked, references taken and training in adult care is provided. They will liaise with family as requested in their plans if they are concerned for welfare of services users, as well as having contact with social workers and assisting to raise emergency services if needed.</p> <p>The implementation plan and transition will include a review of wider welfare needs of individuals and opportunities to address social isolation for vulnerable people. It is acknowledged that social interaction with the provider is important, but this should not be a solution to social isolation. Therefore, in partnership with VCSE providers' offer of connecting individuals to community assets will be paramount to the individual conversations as part of the implementation process.</p>
Sexual orientation - people who are lesbian, gay and bisexual.	See comments under Race.	See comments under Race.	See comments under Race.

	List any adverse impacts identified from data or engagement	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why	Please detail what actions you will take to remedy any identified adverse impact i.e. actions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
Marriage and civil partnership (Only in relation to due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination)	See comments under Race.	See comments under Race.	See comments under Race.
Caring status (including pregnancy & maternity)	<p>It is acknowledged that due to the nature of the service and the support it provides, this could have an impact on carers of service users. Some carers may need to provide additional support if the service user decides to stop the meal delivery service.</p> <p>It is, however, noted that we do not anticipate that this of itself raises potential for significant differential impact on the grounds of caring status.</p> <p>From the consultation, concerns were noted that the current service provides the carer / family member 'peace of mind' and that they may have to provide additional support.</p>	See comments under Race.	<p>See comments under Race.</p> <p>Each service user will be offered an assessment to consider their individual and ongoing needs are. These assessments can be held with service users and their families.</p> <p>The alternative hot and cold meal providers have advised that their approach is akin to that of the council service. Staff are DBS checked, references taken and training in adult care is provided. They will liaise with family as requested in their plans if they are concerned for welfare of services users, as well as having contact with social workers and assisting to raise emergency services if needed.</p> <p>The implementation plan and transition will include a review of wider welfare needs of individuals and opportunities to address social isolation for vulnerable people.</p>

	List any adverse impacts identified from data or engagement	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why	Please detail what actions you will take to remedy any identified adverse impact i.e. actions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
Socio-economic	<p>It is acknowledged that due to the nature of the service and the support it provides, there will be a proportion of service users who may have fixed and limited finances. The increase in the cost of meals may result in their decision to stop the service or reduce the frequency.</p> <p>It is, however, noted that we do not anticipate that this of itself raises potential for significant differential impact on the grounds of socio-economic.</p> <p>From the consultation, concerns were noted relating to the increased cost of alternative provision, especially from those who are unable to have frozen/microwave meals so would pay a higher charge for a cooked meal delivered to the door.</p>	<p>See comments under Race.</p> <p>The current cost of delivering the hot meals to residents is £7.85 per meal. The current charge for each meal is £4.59, meaning a subsidy of £3.26 per meal is being provided currently. Budget pressures mean that the council can no longer retain this subsidy. Alternative providers can offer this service at a more competitive price.</p>	<p>See comments under Race.</p> <p>Confirmation has been provided by a major national provider that they wish to operate in Bolton at the stated rates in the original report. In addition, a number of local providers in neighbourhoods have expressed an interest in providing a service.</p> <p>Discretion will be used to assist individuals who may have financial difficulties to graduate the increase in costs over a period of time, to mitigate the impact.</p>
Other comments or issues.	The feedback from consultation with staff, trade unions, service users and stakeholders contained within this report and within appendices, have been considered to inform this Equality Impact Assessment.		

	List any adverse impacts identified from data or engagement	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why	Please detail what actions you will take to remedy any identified adverse impact i.e. actions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
Please provide a list of the evidence used to inform this EIA, such as the results of consultation or other engagement, service take-up, service monitoring, surveys, stakeholder comments and complaints where appropriate.	Results of consultation with staff, trade unions, service users and stakeholders have been used to inform this EIA.		

This EIA form and report has been checked and countersigned by the Directorate Equalities Officer before proceeding to Executive Member(s)

Please confirm the outcome of this EIA:

No major impact identified, therefore no major changes required – proceed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjustments to remove barriers / promote equality (mitigate impact) have been identified – proceed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Positive impact for one or more groups justified on the grounds of promoting equality - proceed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continue despite having identified potential for adverse impact/missed opportunities for promoting equality – this requires a strong justification	<input type="checkbox"/>
The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and rethink	<input type="checkbox"/>

Report Officer

Name: Rachel Tanner

Date: 15.10.2019

Directorate Equalities Lead Officer

Name: Jenny Foy / Lisa Corbett

Date: 15.10.2019