

The Vale of Glamorgan Council

Cabinet Meeting: 9 January, 2017

Joint Report of the Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Social Care & Health

Reshaping Services - Review of Meals on Wheels Service

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet approval on the way in which the current Meals on Wheels service is delivered.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet note the content of this report and the minutes of the Scrutiny Committee (Healthy Living and Social Care) meeting of 8 December 2016 (attached at [Appendix B](#)).
2. That Cabinet endorses the preferred option as outlined in this report, which is to cease to provide the Council's internal Meals on Wheels service and signpost to alternatives, including a new Social Enterprise.
3. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Social Services in consultation with the Leader, Cabinet Member for Housing and Social Care, the Managing Director and Head of Adult Services to undertake and conclude all necessary actions, including staff consultation, as described in this report in order to implement the preferred option.

Reasons for the Recommendations

1. To ensure that the process for taking forward any changes to the service is undertaken effectively in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures and that the views of the Scrutiny Committee are taken into account when reaching a decision about how to progress.
2. To ensure that the availability of a hot meal to those who have been assessed as requiring prepared food remains available and is cost effective and that the Council continues to develop its arrangements under the Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to support Social Enterprises.
3. To ensure that the process for progressing any changes is undertaken efficiently and effectively in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.

Background

1. A report was considered by Scrutiny Committee (Social Care and Health) on 1st February 2016, which gave an update on how the Council's Meals on Wheels service is currently being delivered. That report is referenced in the [Background Papers](#) to this report. The report also outlined the rationale for considering alternative ways of meeting the nutritional needs of those who are eligible for care and support from the Social Services Directorate, in response to changing levels of demand for the service.
2. The report made a recommendation that a further report on potential alternative service models was developed for consideration by Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in due course. It was considered that a more comprehensive review of the service was required to consider how the needs of the population could be best met in the future, including the development of preventative services and the merits of alternative models of provision.
3. Cabinet considered a report detailing potential options for the provision of this service on 28th November 2016 and that report can be found in the [Background Papers](#) to this report. Cabinet referred the report to Scrutiny Committee (Healthy Living and Social Care) and this was considered at the Committee's meeting on 8th December 2016. The minutes of the Committee meeting can be found in [Appendix B](#).
4. This report sets out the results from the review process and outlines a number of options for the future delivery of the service. This report identifies a preferred option for the service, which is to cease to provide the Council's internal Meals on Wheels service and signpost to alternatives, including a new Social Enterprise.

Relevant Issues and Options

5. As part of assessing a client's social care needs, social workers consider a range of issues, including the service users' nutritional needs. Where such a need is accepted as being required, this can be met in a number of ways. For example, carers may ensure a client receives a meal (as part of a domiciliary care package or via a family carer). Social workers may also signpost the service user to the availability of services that can meet their needs, for example via the delivery of frozen meals and luncheon clubs. The service user may also be referred to make use of the Council's existing Meals on Wheels service.
6. In October 2016, the Council had domiciliary care arrangements in place for 952 people. It is not possible to determine precisely the number of care packages which include support with meals as this would require each care plan being individually reviewed. However, the relevant social care teams estimate that approximately 75% of these packages would include an element of support for meals (approximately 700 service users) and so require more support than a hot meal delivery service could supply alone.

Current Service Profile

7. The Council's Meals on Wheels service is a social care service that delivers a hot meal at home to people who are assessed as being unable to undertake this task for themselves. Meals are currently purchased from the company 'Apetito' in the form of frozen ready meals. These are then heated in the kitchen of Rondel House, Barry by cook/drivers employed by the service. Meals are delivered to clients throughout the Vale of Glamorgan by drivers who are employed by the service.
8. The following table shows the number of staff who are currently employed by the Meals on Wheels Service:

Post Title	Headcount	Weekly Hours
MOW Coordinator	1	20
MOW Cook/Driver	2	52.75
MOW Driver	2	30
Total	5	102.75

9. In the Vale of Glamorgan, the number of people who use the Meals on Wheels service has decreased in recent years. The service currently delivers approximately 45 meals each weekday. This is a significant reduction from the average of 112 meals per day which were provided in 2012. At weekends, a reduced service operates and approximately 23 meals on each weekend day are delivered to customers in the central and eastern areas of the Vale of Glamorgan.
10. Currently the service operates three rounds and each round serves the following number of clients:

Round	Average No of Weekday Clients	Average No of Weekend Clients
Sully, Penarth, Llandough and Dinas Powys (Eastern area).	20	11
Most of Barry, including Barry Island (Central area).	15	12 (including Central/Western meals)
North West Barry, Rhose, Llantwit Major and St Athan (Central/Western area).	10	n/a
Total	45	23

11. The Meals on Wheels service in the western area of the Vale of Glamorgan (west of Llantwit Major, i.e. Cowbridge and surrounding villages) was discontinued several years ago, following equipment failure in the local kitchen. Existing and new service users were supported to transfer to the range of alternative meal services which are available in this area.

12. The following table provides an overview of the cost of meals and the levels of demand from customers over the past five years.

Year	Cost of meal	Cost of meal and dessert	Approx. no of Customers Mon-Fri	Approx. no of Weekend Customers
2012	£2.00	£2.50	560	84
2013	£2.80	£3.30	515	80
2014	£4.10	£4.10	390	80
2015	£4.10	£4.10	375	58
2016	£4.60	£4.60	225	46

13. In 2013/14, the costs across Wales varied between £2.35 and £4.00. In 2014/15, the cost varied between £2.60 and £5.00. It is evident that authorities across Wales are seeking to increase the income generated by the service to reduce their overall costs. As of November 2016, approximately half of the 22 Welsh Councils now operate Meals on Wheels services.
14. As illustrated by the above table, the charge for a meal (main meal and dessert) in the Vale of Glamorgan was £3.30 in 2013 and rose to £4.10 in 2014. From 1st August 2016, the price of a meal rose to £4.60, which is the current charge. This was to bring the charge closer to the costs of preparing and delivering meals. Reductions in the number of meals provided mean that the expected rise in overall income through the price increase has not been fully realised. The current cost per meal to provide the service (unit cost) is £8.99 based upon the actual expenditure for 2015/16 (increased by 1% for inflation) divided by the current number of recipients of a meal. The service is in the process of reducing some of its running costs and so it is expected that the true unit cost would be slightly lower than this.

Service Review

15. A review of the service has been undertaken and a number of options for the future of the service have been evaluated. The first of these options is to continue the service as it currently operates. Options two and three consider ways of making changes to the Council's existing internal service. The final option is to consider alternative ways of ensuring needs are met by ceasing to operate the Council service and signposting to alternative providers.
16. The options have been appraised against a series of criteria for the way in which the service is delivered. The criteria are as follows:
- Criteria 1: Availability of a hot meal to those who have been assessed as requiring prepared food. This is in order to meet the Council's duty to meet needs where these have been assessed.
 - Criteria 2: The service should be provided in a way that leads to improved congruence with the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014. The Act changes the way people's needs are assessed and the way services are delivered to enable people to have more of a say in the care and support they receive. The

Act seeks to ensure Councils promote the range of help available within the community to reduce the need for formal, planned support. Aspects of the Act relevant to this review include the intention for services to be available to provide the right support at the right time, that more information and advice will be available and assessment will be simpler and proportionate. The Act also places a duty on Councils to support the development of social enterprises to become involved in the provision of social care services.

- Criteria 3: The option should enable coverage across the Vale of Glamorgan. As described above, the Council's Meals on Wheels service is provided in the eastern and central areas of the Vale of Glamorgan. Any future approach to meeting the need for hot meals will take into consideration the availability for service users across the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Criteria 4: The service should operate on a cost neutral basis. This criterion reflects the Council's current policy to move towards a cost neutral service. Members will note the difficulty reported previously in achieving cost neutrality due to the extent to which demand reduces as prices rise. As context, the Adult Services division is required to deliver savings of £970k from 2017-2020 through Reshaping Services projects. Savings targets have been set within service to support the delivery of this £970k saving. The available budget for the Meals on Wheels service 2015/16 was £13,334 and the service cost £50,918 (i.e. an overspend of £37,584 against budget).

Option 1 – Continue with the Current Service

17. The first option for consideration is to continue with the service as it currently operates. The current service provides a hot meal to those who have been assessed as being unable to undertake this task for themselves and who do not have this need met in another way as part of a care package (for example, a meal being provided by a domiciliary carer). The service is not available to those who do not meet the eligibility criteria for social services in the Vale of Glamorgan.
18. As described above, the Council's Meals on Wheels service currently only operates in the central and eastern areas of the Vale of Glamorgan. Alternative meal services are available in this area (and other parts of the Vale of Glamorgan), such as frozen meals delivery services and luncheon clubs.
19. Following a customer satisfaction survey that was undertaken with the existing service users in central and eastern areas in June 2015, it was clear that they felt uninformed about alternative meal options that are available to them.
20. The service operated at a loss during 2015/16. This position has worsened since the previous year. The service has continued to review and manage its cost base in recent years, by reducing staffing to a level appropriate to heat and deliver meals and through the redesign of routes to reduce transport costs. This in addition to the decision to cease operating the service in the western area due to the prohibitive costs involved in doing so. Demand for the service is

decreasing as highlighted above and continuing to operate in the same way would mean that the criteria for cost neutrality would not be achieved.

21. The benefits of continuing the service as it currently operates are that existing service users would continue to receive the same service that they currently receive (and indicate they are satisfied with). There would also be no immediate staffing implications associated with this option.

Option 2 – Increase Revenue to Meet Costs

22. This option considers the potential for the Council's Meals on Wheels service to increase revenue based on the existing client base in order to meet the costs of operating the service.
23. The current charge to a customer for a meal (with dessert) is £4.60. This price has increased substantially since 2011. In order to make the Meals on Wheels service cost neutral, consideration could be given to increasing the cost of a meal to the £8.99 that it cost to deliver the service as at February 2016 based upon the number of recipients at that time.
24. Between 2012 and 2013 the price of a meal and dessert increased by 32%, which led to an 8% decrease in the number of service users. Between 2013 and 2014, the price of a meal and a dessert rose by 24% and the service saw client numbers drop by 21%. Between 2014 and 2015, the price of a meal and dessert remained unchanged at £4.10 whilst the number of clients decreased by 8%. More recently, between 2015 and 2016 the price of a meal and dessert increased by 50p to £4.60 (12%) and at the same time there was a 37% drop in client numbers. Based on this it is suggested that raising the price of the meals to cover costs for the existing number of clients would not achieve cost neutrality as there is a long running decreasing trend in demand.
25. It also appears that the prices that are now charged could also be impacting upon service users' decisions as to whether to take up the service or not. Research shows that there are alternative options available to clients for a substantially lower price than £8.99. Such options include Wiltshire Farm Foods who will deliver frozen meals to customers for a cost per meal starting from £2.95 for a main meal (e.g. chicken curry with vegetable rice) as well as the availability of services provided by luncheon clubs and social enterprises.

Option 3 – Increase Demand to Maximise Capacity & Reduce Costs

26. The third option that should be considered is to increase the demand for Meals on Wheels in order to generate additional revenue for the service with the aim of covering its costs.
27. In order to recover the projected costs for 2016/17, the service would need to sell 529 meals per week in order to break even. This would be an increase in current demand of 95% and as such, it is questionable as to whether this is achievable.

28. There are various ways in which this option could be achieved.
29. In order to qualify for the Meals on Wheels service at present, a person must have been assessed as being unable to provide themselves with a hot meal at home. Consideration could be given to removing the current eligibility criteria for the service. This would mean that the service could be advertised to increase demand within the central and eastern areas of the Vale of Glamorgan with the aim of utilising spare capacity within the existing rounds.
30. The service could also seek to re-establish delivery to the western area of the Vale of Glamorgan. However, the council would have to re-establish a client base in this area and the additional distances involved in delivering to rural locations could not be undertaken with the Council's existing delivery equipment and location in Barry and would therefore require significant additional investment.
31. Increasing the client base to a level required for revenue to cover costs is likely to be problematic especially in light of reducing demand in recent years. The costs of promoting and establishing additional demand would also need to be considered carefully, including any impact upon the management of the service which is likely to become more complex.

Option 4 – Cease Internal Service and Signpost to Alternatives, including a new Social Enterprise

32. The final option for consideration would be to cease the Council run Meals on Wheels service entirely and signpost to alternatives. There is no statutory requirement for the local authority to provide the Meals on Wheels service. However, the Council must assess the needs of individual people and then ensure that, where there are eligible risks to independence, these risks are mitigated through the provision of services. Those who experience risks associated with potential malnutrition would be eligible for a service to ensure that their needs are met. This can be done in various ways and not just through the delivery of a hot meal by the local authority.
33. As described above, there are a range of alternatives to the Council's Meals on Wheels service to meet the needs of eligible service users, such as frozen meal delivery services and social enterprises. Frozen meal delivery services operate within the Vale of Glamorgan and enable service users (or their carers) to reheat a meal at home at a time that suits the client and meets their tastes. There are also a growing number of social enterprises operating to provide a hot meal in the same way as the Council's Meals on Wheels Service.
34. An example of such a social enterprise is The Food Shed which is based in Bridgend. The Food Shed (www.thefoodshed.org.uk) has developed a partnership with HMP Parc Prison to provide freshly cooked meals daily. HMP Parc Prison produces the meals which are delivered by drivers who are employed by the Food Shed. A choice of a meat, fish or vegetarian meals plus a pudding are provided each day at a cost of £4.75 including delivery. There is also the option for delivery of an afternoon snack plus cake or fruit for an additional

£2.25 for customers ordering a main meal. Meals can be ordered on a short term or more regular basis and are offered on a four week rolling menu. From initial discussions with the Food Shed, this organisation is keen to extend its current operation into all areas of the Vale of Glamorgan and currently has capacity to do so.

35. The Council's Meals on Wheels service is currently only available to those people with assessed needs as described above. However, the alternative arrangements described above could also enable other individuals to be able to access a service giving them greater choice over what and when they can eat, without any requirement for an assessment by social services. Additionally, a number of luncheon clubs currently exist across the Vale of Glamorgan. These provide not only a meal but also an opportunity to engage with other people, tackling issues such as loneliness and social isolation.

36. This option would result in the Council's Meals on Wheels Service no longer operating. As mentioned above, there is no direct statutory obligation for the Council to operate a meal service. Instead, both current and future Meals on Wheels service users would be signposted to suitable alternatives to enable their needs to be met.

Conclusion & Preferred Option

37. Each of these options have been evaluated against the following criteria:

- Availability of a hot meal to those who have been assessed as being unable to undertake this task for themselves
- The service should be provided in a way that leads to improved congruence with the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014
- The service should provide coverage across the Vale of Glamorgan
- The service should operate cost neutrally

38. The following table provides an illustrative summary of the four options against the review criteria:

Criteria	Option			
	1 Continue Current Service	2 Increase Charges for Meals	3 Increase Demand	4 Cease Internal Service and Signpost
1- Availability of a hot meal	✓	✓	✓	✓
2- Improved congruence with the SS and Wellbeing Act	x	x	x	✓
3- Coverage across entire Vale of Glamorgan	x	x	✓	✓

4- Cost neutral service	x	✓	✓	✓
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39. The table above demonstrates that option 4 (i.e. to cease the internal service and signpost to alternatives) best meets the criteria of the review and therefore is the preferred option. This option would ensure that a hot meal could be delivered to those who require it. The option is also congruent with the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) as it promotes choice, is supportive of provision in the community and promotes the work of social enterprises. Alternative meal providers are able to provide coverage across the entire Vale of Glamorgan area and therefore are able to reach out to a wider client base than the Council currently (or could likely) serves. By ceasing to provide a Council run Meals on Wheels service, the Council will no longer operate at a loss and therefore will meet the criteria for cost neutrality and therefore contribute to the Directorate's savings target.

40. At the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee (Healthy Living and Social Care) on 8th December 2016, the Committee discussed the report and also heard from a member of the public who had registered to speak at the meeting. Following consideration of the report, the Scrutiny Committee resolved: that the contents of the report be noted; that the Committee supported the implementation Option 4, (Cease the Internal Service and to signpost to Alternatives, including a new Social Enterprise) and that the views of the Committee, as outlined in the minutes, be referred to Cabinet for its consideration. These minutes can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Implementation of Preferred Option

41. In order to implement this option, all current service users would need to be contacted for reassessment, with signposting information provided to ensure their needs continue to be met. This will include entering into written communication with each current service user in order to explain what the changes are, the reason for making them explaining the options that are available to them. These letters will be followed up with a phone call or home visit where necessary to ensure service users are appropriately informed and arrangements put in place. Where an alternative is chosen to Meals on Wheels (and with their permission) the client's details will be passed on to the relevant organisation to enable them to initiate contact and to arrange a visit to discuss their service offering and the process for handover as required.

42. It is proposed that the Council will work with the Food Shed to begin the provision of services as soon as possible in the western area of the Vale of Glamorgan. This would result in an additional available service to residents in that area in the short term. The Food Shed would seek to expand (via marketing and logistically) across the Vale in parallel with the changes that the Council would make to the Meals on Wheels service. Legally, the Council is under no obligation to enter into a contract with the Food Shed to provide meals to clients (in the same way as there is no commissioned arrangement with other providers, such as Wiltshire Farm Foods). Information and advice services offered from Contact OneVale

would be amended to reflect the new arrangements and facilitate the signposting of potential clients to the range of providers described in this report.

43. Ceasing to provide a Council run Meals on Wheels service would have implications for the staff currently employed by the service and these are outlined in the relevant section of this report.

Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)

44. The current 2016/17 budget held by Social Services for providing the Meals on Wheels service as it currently operates is £13,334. The cost of operating the service in 2015/16 was £50,918 giving an overspend of £37,584. Ceasing to operate the Meals on Wheels service will give a revenue saving of £13,334 based on the budget and would also achieve a saving on expenditure (overspend) which is currently being offset by other Social Services budgets.

45. Implementation of the proposals for the preferred option for the Meals on Wheels Service would be realised from 1st April 2017. This will contribute to the £970k savings target which has been set for 2017-2020 through the Reshaping Services programme. Savings targets have been set within Adult Services to support the delivery of this £970k saving.

46. Due to the nature of the changes proposed, provision for potential redundancy payments is required and is estimated to be a maximum of £27,000 for the Meals on Wheels service. This figure also contains provision required to meet the potential pension strain (actuarial) costs. It is proposed that these costs be met from the Council's Early Retirement and Redundancy Fund.

47. There are important human resource and employee relations implications associated with the implementation of the above proposals. The implementation of changes will require a clear communication and engagement strategy with staff and the recognised trade unions from across the Council. To ensure a consistent approach to implementing these changes, it is proposed that changes are progressed by following the timeline set out below.

48. The timeline has been designed to ensure the continuing engagement of staff and trade unions and the meeting of all statutory and local consultation requirements.

49. A summary of the timeline of key activities for the project is set out below.

Key Activities	Description	Timescale
Pre-Cabinet Preparation	Information to trade unions.	November 2016
	Information provided to staff.	November 2016
Cabinet Report	Cabinet Consideration.	28 November 2016
	Scrutiny Consideration.	8 December 2016
	Cabinet Determination.	9 January 2017
Staff and Union	Meet formally with staff	January 2017

Consultation (subject to the above)	and Trade Unions. 30 day consultation (minimum) begins to include potential selection proposals. Canvass for voluntary redundancies (as appropriate). End of consultation.	January 2017 January 2017 February 2017
Consultation Evaluation	Evaluation of consultation feedback and proposals refined as appropriate.	February/March 2017
Staff Correspondence	Letters issued to all staff at risk.	March 2017
Avoiding Redundancy/Redeployment	Avoiding Redundancy/ Redeployment procedures implemented as required.	March/April 2017
Notice Periods	Staff given notice (if required).	March/April 2017
Implementation of changes	Changes to service implemented.	From April 2017

50. Subject to the determination of Cabinet, full consultation will be carried out with staff and the relevant trade unions throughout all stages of the project.

51. The above timeframe provides an indicative project plan, which may be subject to change as determined by the outcomes of each key activity as set out above.

52. As part of the consultation arrangements, the service will progress these proposals in accordance with the Council's agreed policies and procedures, in particular the Change Management and the Avoiding Redundancy policy and procedures. Where possible, opportunities to mitigate the displacement of staff will be fully explored through matching existing staff to appropriate posts or redeploying to suitable existing vacant positions within the Service and the wider Council.

53. The Council is committed to offering voluntary redundancy opportunities to staff in circumstances where change of this nature is being proposed. This will be progressed using an agreed set of criteria and discussed with Trade Unions and staff throughout the process.

54. As the proposals suggest that the Council ceases to provide the Meals on Wheels service and signposts to alternative options, TUPE would not apply as the Council would not be contracting the service to another organisation.

Sustainability and Climate Change Implications

55. The Council is committed to promoting sustainable development and our understanding of our duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. This proposal demonstrates the Council's approach to sustainable development and the five ways of working introduced by the Act. The proposal seeks to take into consideration the long-term sustainability of meeting client's needs, taking an integrated approach to the way the Council operates and seeking to work with others in a collaborative way. In doing so, the proposal seeks to contribute to the national well-being goals established by the Act, notably a healthier Wales and a Wales of cohesive communities.

Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)

56. Given the nature of the proposals associated with the preferred option for the future of the meals on Wheels service there are a number of employment law implications that arise and advice in regards to these issues has been sought and will continue to be as appropriate. As mentioned above, as the preferred option suggests that the Council ceases to provide the Meals on Wheels service and signposts to alternatives, TUPE would not apply as the Council would not be contracting the service to another organisation.

57. It is also relevant to note that the Council has no direct statutory obligation to provide a meal service. The legal context in terms of assessment of need, and determination of eligibility and consideration of what to do in meeting the assessed needs are the relevant provisions in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, accompanying regulations and statutory guidance, which the Council will continue to follow.

58. Obviously, the present recipients of the Meals on Wheels service will need to be informed that it is to be closed. At the same time, they will need to be advised of the other options available to them. Those who have Meals on Wheels as part of a community care package will need to have a reassessment of their health and social care needs, under the SSWWAA 2014, in order to identify whether (a) they have any other needs and (b) assist them in identifying which is the best option for them. The Authority has ongoing community care obligations towards this group, including the wellbeing duty under the new Act. There is also a general principle that where services are to be withdrawn, there must be a reassessment of the person's needs.

Crime and Disorder Implications

59. There are no crime or disorder implications that should arise as a result of this report.

Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)

60. The project has clear equalities impacts and an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and a copy is included in [Appendix A](#). This identifies that the

proposals will have some adverse impact upon service users, staff and carers but it includes mitigating actions which are also referenced in the body of this report. Members will be aware of their duty to pay due regard to the impact that any proposed changes may have on protected characteristic groups when reaching a decision.

61. The Council must comply with the public sector equality duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when coming to a decision on the proposals contained in this report. Section 149 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it: Equality Act 2010 s149 (1).
62. The relevant protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation: section 149 (7) of the Equality Act.
63. Section 149(3) of the Equality Act states that having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves due regard, in particular, to the need to:
 - Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
 - Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low;
 - The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
64. Section 149(5) of the Equality Act states that having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to tackle prejudice, and promote understanding. Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.
65. To discharge the public sector equality duty the decision-maker must analyse all the relevant material with the specific statutory consideration in mind. This includes considering whether the proposed decision is capable of having an adverse impact on persons who have any of the relevant protected characteristics. If it is, consideration should be given to whether there are any steps that could be taken (by way of modification of the proposed decision) to

avoid or mitigate that impact. If there are such steps, consideration must be given to whether or not to adopt any of them as part of the final decision.

66. In reaching their decision on the future of the service, Cabinet members must satisfy themselves:
- (a) that they understand the proposed decisions are capable of adversely affecting persons who have any protected characteristic (and have sufficient information before them to reach a decision on this, one way or the other); and
 - (b) that they have conscientiously and rigorously addressed whether there are steps that could be taken to remove or mitigate any such disadvantages identified for particular equality groups. Cabinet members should then consider whether or not to modify the proposed decision to incorporate such steps (if there are any). In addition, Cabinet members should scrutinise the decision against the other public sector equality duty criteria (i.e. advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations). Here too if the proposed decision provides the opportunity to serve either of these objectives (in its proposed form, or if any modification were made to it), this too should be considered.
67. An Equality Impact Assessment on the preferred proposal to cease the Council run Meals on Wheels service and to signpost to alternatives is attached at [Appendix A](#).
68. Officers have sought to investigate whether the proposals would result in a negative impact to service provision, or an adverse impact on people sharing any of the protected characteristics. The potential for adverse impacts as a result of ceasing to provide a Council run Meals on Wheels service in the Vale of Glamorgan for groups with protected characteristics and proposed mitigating actions to address them should they arise are set out in the Equality Impact Assessment in [Appendix A](#).
69. Given that the option would ensure that a hot meal could be delivered to those who require it within the Vale of Glamorgan, it is not expected that the changes will ultimately adversely affect the persons in any of the protected groups.
70. Of the 77 people who currently access the Meals on Wheels service, all of them are over 65 years of age and assessed as living with care and support needs under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 which is likely to represent a protected characteristic as being defined as a disabled person.
71. All people with eligible needs would be supported via proposed transitional arrangements, which would include all current service users being contacted for reassessment, with signposting information provided to ensure their needs continue to be met. This will include each current service user being written to in order to explain what the changes are, the reason for making them explaining the options that are available to them. These letters will be followed up with a phone call or home visit where necessary to ensure service users are appropriately informed and arrangements put in place. Where an alternative is chosen to Meals

on Wheels (and with their permission) the client's details will be passed on to the relevant organisation to enable them to initiate contact and to arrange a visit to discuss their service offering and the process for handover as required.

72. Feedback collated from the customer satisfaction exercise that was undertaken in June 2015, indicates that the current service model is valued by service users. Overall, the outcome of the exercise was positive, with many people happy with the service. Service users stated that information provision was good, although perhaps viewing the menus before the service is provided would help the service user make an informed decision about receiving the service. Additionally, it was raised that Contact OneVale must ensure that they are signposting people to alternative meal provision where appropriate. The service was found to be reliable; although some were not happy about the time of day the meals arrive.
73. Initially, the process of change and adjusting to a different provider may have a negative impact on some people. However, alternative services would be sought on the basis that they meet the well-being requirements of individuals. Transitional support would be provided for service users as mentioned previously and service users will be given the opportunity to discuss the points raised during the customer satisfaction survey and stated above with new providers.
74. It should be noted that the Council remains very much committed to ensuring that the personal well-being outcomes of service users continue to be achieved through the provision of care and support, albeit in a different way. The Council will continue to have due regard to any adverse impact upon individuals found to be in a protected group as we move forward to implement any changes to provision of this service, as further information comes to light.

Corporate/Service Objectives

75. These proposals are consistent with the Council's Corporate Plan, Well-being Outcome 4: An Active & Healthy Vale. The proposals seek to safeguard those who are vulnerable and promote independent living. In particular, the report will contribute to the Council's implementation of new ways of working in light of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, with a particular emphasis on provision of information, advice and assistance services and the promotion of preventative services.
76. The proposals contained in this report will contribute to a savings target which has been set for 2017-2020 through the Reshaping Services programme.

Policy Framework and Budget

77. This is a matter for Executive decision.

Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)

78. These proposals were considered by Scrutiny Committee (Healthy Living and Social Care) at the meeting of 8th December 2016 and the minutes of that meeting can be found in [Appendix B](#).

79. These proposals have been recently discussed with the recognised Trade Unions and with employees within the Service.

80. A full programme of communication, engagement and staff consultation will be carried out as described in the report.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

81. Healthy Living and Social Care.

Background Papers

Scrutiny Committee (Social Care and Health) Report - 1st February, 2016 – The Meals on Wheels Service

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/reports/scrutiny_sch/2016/16-02-01/Meals-on-Wheels-Service.aspx

Cabinet Meeting – 28th November, 2016 – Reshaping Services – Review of Meals on Wheels Service

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/_Committee%20Reports/Cabinet/2016/16-11-28/Reports/Reshaping-Services-Review-of-Meals-on-Wheels-Service-Cabinet-Report.pdf

Contact Officer

Lance Carver, Head of Adult Services

Officers Consulted

Operational Manager, Human Resources
Operational Manager, Legal Services
Operational Manager, Policy and Performance
Operational Manager, Accountancy
Operational Manager, Mental Health
Senior Lawyer (Employment Law)
Resource Centre Manager – Meals on Wheels
Equalities Officer

Responsible Officer

Philip Evans, Director of Social Services