
REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date of Meeting:	14 March 2019
Subject:	Expansion of Meals on Wheels Services to other London Boroughs
Key Decision:	Yes, as it is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area of two or more wards of the Borough.
Responsible Officer:	Paul Walker, Corporate Director Community
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Varsha Parmar, Portfolio Holder for Environment
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report seeks Cabinet approval to embark on expanding the provision of Meals on Wheels

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Grant approval to expand the provision of meals on wheels services to other London boroughs

2. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Community following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director of Finance to undertake the activities required to expand the meals on wheels services to other London boroughs and to negotiate and enter into contracts with participating boroughs.

Reason: (for recommendations)

To support shared service objectives that enhance sustainability of the Council's current meals on wheels service.

Section 2 – Report

- 1.1. During the 2016/17 financial year the meals on wheels service was transferred from the People Directorate to the Community Directorate. The service had seen dwindling number of meals being delivered and efforts have been made to ensure it could be a sustainable service. The service was reviewed by the commercialisation arm of the Community Directorate and was the subject of a January 2017 business case that outlined that service sustainability was intrinsically linked to an expansion of the service on two fronts i.e. increasing the meals delivered in Harrow but also engaging in shared service or contractual arrangements with other boroughs.
- 1.2. Over the last financial year Harrow has engaged with a number of boroughs to explore opportunities for expanding its meals on wheels service. This has included Harrow being signposted on a number of boroughs' CarePlace systems to raise awareness of the Harrow offer for meals service. There have also been discussions with a number of boroughs who were likely to make decisions around delivery arrangements in the short to medium term.
- 1.3. The nature of the service does mean that there is an on-going requirement to operate efficiently in bidding and negotiating the final proposals to facilitate any components of delivery that are differentiated between boroughs.
- 1.4. Those discussions are now yielding results with one expansion opportunity starting in April 2019 with the provision of a meals on wheels service to the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. Discussions are also underway with some other boroughs and there will be the need to move quickly in agreeing and delivering these, providing they meet the principles established in the Hammersmith and Fulham scenario.
- 1.5. These core principles include the following;
 - Harrow to undertake the preparation and delivery of the meals. Preparation will take place from current kitchen arrangements

but will move to the Depot at the end of 2019/20 when the new commercial kitchen is built.

- Meals are prepared fresh and then packaged for delivery
- Meals can be delivered hot, chilled or frozen to request
- Online booking system that facilitates out of hours bookings and payments
- Will respond to queries within 24 hours
- drivers are enhanced disclosure and barring services (DBS) checked, and are customer service trained.
- There is a 4 week rotational menu available on the Harrow Commercial Services website and that is what will be used as base menu.
- Additional charges apply where meals vary from the menu
- Harrow will not take any redundancy liability for TUPE staff
- Harrow will not take liability for any client contribution arrears but will support boroughs in direct payment arrangements.

1.6. Options considered

The following options were considered:

- Maintain the status quo delivering a service to Harrow only- this option was rejected as this would not meet the objectives around sustainable services.
- Expand the service to other boroughs- this is the recommended option as it ensures the sustainability of the current service.

1.7. Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? Yes

The main risks associated with the expansion activities include :

- Food quality: Meals are arriving warm/cold - This is being mitigated by ensuring that food is kept in correct containers and regenerated in the tried and tested fashion. Periodic quality inspections (e.g. monitoring temperature of food) to be carried out as part of recorded QC process.
- Food quality: Reports of food poisoning received - Harrow will maintain 5 star food hygiene rating.
- Back office: Booking system crash / IT failure - Harrow will ensure that there is a separate back-up of delivery schedule / adapt Business Continuity Plan to ensure back up procedure is in place to maintain service delivery.
- Service: Meals arrive late - This is mitigated by route scheduling designed to ensure delivery slots are maintained. Regular review of journey times and travel patterns to ensure consistent service.
- Service: Meals not delivered / wrong meal delivered – This is mitigated

by utilising written processes and QC procedures to ensure meals are delivered correctly, and orders fulfilled. Automated booking system with additional QC checks should ensure service reliability.

- Service: Complaints about staff - All staff will have enhanced DBS checks, and be trained in customer service protocol, and be in uniform. Line manager will maintain regular QC checks. Staff will have regular appraisals, and robust complaints procedure will be in place if any incidents arise.
- Transport: Vehicle breakdowns, vehicles off the road - Harrow operates a modern fleet including state of the art electric vehicles. All vehicles are in well maintained order, and back-up vehicles are available if regular fleet is off the road for servicing.

Procurement Implications

Any procurement required as part of expansion activities will follow the Public Contract Regulation 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Legal Implications

There are various statutory provisions that permit these arrangements, including the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970, The Civic Restaurants Act 1947, The Care Act 2014, section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 2003, and the Localism Act 2011. Essentially, these provisions together with the mandatory and discretionary powers of local authorities to provide meals on wheels and adult catering services establish the legal framework that facilitates these arrangements.

The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006" as amended by the "Collective Redundancies and Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (Amendment) Regulations 2014" (TUPE) is likely to apply and officers will be required to give due consideration to the implications of the transfer of staff during the tender process.

Financial Implications

Harrow's Adults Catering service has a net budgeted cost of £33,000 in 2018/19. The latest budget forecast indicates an adverse variance of around £40,000 against its budget. This is considered not financially viable should the service continue to be delivered in the same way due to the small volume of the meals. The proposal to deliver the meals on wheels service to other boroughs will provide the opportunity for economies of scale and utilise the resource capacity already available in-house to expand its service.

Before entering into agreements with other London Borough's a financial viability check must be undertaken and signed off by the Director of Finance. This will ensure agreements entered into make a contribution towards the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Equalities implications / Public Sector Equality Duty

There are no equalities Implication to this decision.

Council Priorities

The Council's vision:

Working Together to Make a Difference for Harrow

The proposals meets the Council's priorities and the Harrow Ambition Plan in terms of being more businesslike as it seeks to provide all possible options to ensure maximizing the financial benefits from the procurement. The procurement also supports the continuation and expansion of shared service arrangements.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: ...Dawn Calvert.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief Financial Officer
Date: 8 March 2019		
Name: Stephen Dorian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date 8 March 2019		

Section 3 - Procurement Officer Clearance

Name: Nimesh Mehta.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Head of Procurement
Date: 7 March 2019		

Ward Councillors notified:	NO as it impacts on all Wards
EqIA carried out: NO	
EqIA cleared by: N/A	

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Venetia Reid-Baptiste- Divisional Director-
Commissioning and Commercial Services.
Phone: Ext 2492 Email- venetia.reid-baptiste@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None

**Call-In Waived by the
Chair of Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

NO – CALL IN APPLIES