

Consultation – Analysis of Responses

Summary

The majority of respondents were either unhappy or very unhappy about the proposal although about a quarter of respondents stated that they 'did not mind'. The main concerns were that

- a. Some service users are not able to heat frozen meals because they are unable to operate a microwave/freezer, lack freezer space or do not have a microwave
- b. There will be reduction of contact with other people/reduction of monitoring of health and well being carried out by drivers on an informal basis
- c. The Council is targeting the most vulnerable members of the community, prices may be too high
- d. The Council should reduce costs in other ways, e.g. by reducing high salaries or cutting down on road works

Methodology

The Meals on Wheels consultation ran parallel to, but with a later timescale, to the three community care proposals considered in the December 2006 Cabinet meeting. Potential respondents were made aware the consultation was taking place by the following.

- Press adverts were placed in the Harrow Times, Harrow Leader and the Harrow Observer, announcing that the consultation was taking place and subsequent adverts also provides information about the public meetings.
- Posters were placed in libraries, and on public notice boards, as well as in the civic centre. Copies were also sent to GP surgeries and directly to local organisations to place on their notice boards. Subsequent posters also provided information about the four public meetings held on 1, 2 and 8 November 2006 in different locations across Harrow.
- The Harrow Council website was used to advertise the consultation with links to the PDF documents of each proposal, as well as copies of the adverts, posters and information about the public meetings.
- Consultation packs were sent out to 516 MOW service users (current users or who had used the service in the past 12 months), 396 local organisations and the 63 councillors. Freepost envelopes were provided for completed feedback sheets.

The local organisations were made up of:

Organisation	Number
Community groups	247
Supporting people contractors	89
PCT/GP surgeries	39
Home care providers	21

In order to encourage feedback, potential respondents were able to choose from the following methods to express their views.

- By post using a freepost address (to send back feedback sheets)
- Calling the dedicated telephone consultation line (feedback sheets were filled in by council staff)
- Via email to the dedicated consultation email address
- By taking part in the four public meetings

Participant response - numbers

There were a total of 272 individual responses (feedback sheet, written response, telephone or email). Please note that some 56 of these responses were received before the consultation actually began and the comments made were mainly around comments 1 – 13 in the main table under participant response, on the following pages. The following table breaks down how respondents identified themselves, when provided.

MOW consultation	No.
Service users	158
Carer	32
Organisation	5
Not stated	77

81 people attended the public meetings, of whom 18 were deemed to be from a visible ethnic minority background. Participants in each public meeting were a mix of users, carers and voluntary organisation representatives. Other participants included union representatives, councillors and local press.

The table overleaf provides a breakdown of respondents, who stated their ethnic origin when responding by completing a feedback or sheet or who called the consultation telephone line.

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Ethnic origin of respondents (as stated on feedback sheets)	MoW	
	No.	%
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	6	3.5%
Asian or Asian British Indian	32	18.6%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	-	-
Asian or Asian British Other	3	1.7%
Black or Black British African	2	1.2%
Black or Black British Caribbean	1	0.6%
Black or Black British Other	-	-
Chinese	-	-
Mixed White and Black African	-	-
Mixed White and Black Asian	1	0.6%
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	-	-
Mixed Other	-	-
White British	123	71.5%
White Irish	3	1.7%
White Other	1	0.6%
Total	172	100%

Participant response – Meals on Wheels

Respondents that completed a feedback sheet or telephoned to feedback their views stated were asked to state how they feel about the proposals. The vast majority gave a response, and the outcomes have been listed, below.

Meals on Wheels	Very Happy		Happy		Don't mind		Unhappy		Very unhappy	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Service users (157)	6	3.8%	23	14.7%	38	24.2%	36	22.9%	54	34.4%
Carers (32)	0	0%	2	6.3%	10	31.3%	6	18.7%	14	43.7%
Organisation (5)	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%	2	40%	0	0%

The table below list the comments made by respondents during the consultation, this covers all of the different methods for feeding back views (feedback sheets, dedicated telephone line, dedicated consultation email address and the public meetings).

The analysis of the main points raised by the participants completed the feedback sheets, is as follows.

No.	Comment	Commentary	Recommendation
1	Do not change the existing service	Both hot and frozen meals will still be available for a range of dietary needs	No recommendation
2	Physically unable to heat a frozen meal/ use microwave	A hot meals service will still be available for people who are unable to safely reheat a frozen meal	No recommendation
3	Do not have microwave	All circumstances will be taken into account when considering a persons ability to heat a frozen meal in assessments	No recommendation

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No.	Comment	Commentary	Recommendation
		carried out.	
4	Cannot operate a microwave/freezer	A hot meals service will still be available for people who are unable to safely reheat a frozen meal	No recommendation
5	Continue to provide hot meals to the who are unable to heat/cope with frozen meals	Hot meals will still be available to those unable to manage a frozen meal	No recommendation
6	Freezer is too small to accommodate two weeks worth of meals	We will be able to look at this on an individual basis to see if it is feasible to deliver one weeks supply at a time	As column 2
7	If proposals go ahead may need to provide people with larger freezers and microwaves	We will be able to look at this on an individual basis to see if it is feasible to deliver one weeks supply at a time	As column 2
8	Need to examine physical capabilities of people receiving hot meals if there are plans to provide them with frozen meals	We will assess each person's ability to manage with frozen meals	As column 2
9	Worried that people may not adequately defrost their meals before heating – health consideration Do meals come with instructions	This will be considered as part of assessing which people need to retain a Hot Meals Service. An instruction leaflet will be produced on how to heat frozen meals.	As column 2
10	How have the prices been calculated	Prices take the average cost of producing a hot meal and the average cost of producing a frozen meal including the	No recommendation

No.	Comment	Commentary	Recommendation
		service costs of the kitchen and delivery as well as the cost of the ingredients	
11	Loss of contact with people for some users	This would be considered as part of the assessment for anyone moving from a daily delivery of a hot meal to batch deliveries of frozen meals as a sole service	As column 2
12	Changes to the service will reduce the 'monitoring' of service users health, wellbeing etc which the drivers currently carry out on an informal basis. How will this be continued?	This would be considered as part of the assessment for anyone moving from a daily delivery of a hot meal to batch deliveries of frozen meals as a sole service	As column 2
13*	The current delivered hot meal is the only fresh food I receive	Frozen meals are prepared with fresh ingredients whose nutritional value is not damaged by the process of freezing	As column 2
14	The increased costs of MOW with other increased care charges will be difficult to manage financially	An Equality Impact Assessment will help to establish any potential groups that will be disadvantaged if changes are made to current services.	An improvement plan will include actions required to address any potentially adversely effected groups.
15	Unclear about assessment criteria	The overarching assessment criteria is Fair Access to Care Eligibility Criteria. There will also be focus on any identified risks related to not	As column 2

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No.	Comment	Commentary	Recommendation
		having a ready prepared hot meal delivered daily	
16	How will it effect people in day centres	Day Centres serve up hot meals and therefore the charge for a meal at a day centre will be the same as for a hot meal	As column 2
17	Prices will be too high for service users	An Equality Impact Assessment will help to establish any potential groups that will be disadvantaged if changes are made to current services.	An improvement plan will include actions required to address any potentially adversely effected groups.
18	Improve the standard, range and size of food	This comment is being passed back to the service	As column 2
19	Freezing may be unsuitable for certain foods such as ethnic meals	Our suppliers only use ingredients that are suitable for freezing when they supply frozen meals	No recommendation
20	Agree with the concept of charging differently for hot and cold meals	This seems fair as hot meals cost significantly more to produce and deliver than frozen meals	As column 2
21	The proposals are targeting the old and the vulnerable	An Equality Impact Assessment will help to establish any potential groups that will be disadvantaged if changes are made to current services.	An improvement plan will include actions required to address any potentially adversely effected groups.
22	Without a hot meal provided, some service users may need residential care	Both hot and frozen meals will still be available for a range of dietary needs	As column 2

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No.	Comment	Commentary	Recommendation
23	Find finance from other sources elsewhere e.g. increase revenue from parking, cut down road works	Elected Members are aware of this point	No recommendation
24	The council should manage their budget better	Elected Members are aware of this point	No recommendation
25	Cut the high salaries of council staff	Elected Members are aware of this point	No recommendation
26	Supermarkets are selling ready meals for the price we pay or cheaper	This is the case and many people already choose to buy their meals this way	No recommendation
27	Find alternative suppliers such as Tesco who manage to make a ready meal at the fraction of the cost	We will produce information of major local retailers delivering ready meals for people using direct payments or who make private arrangements.	No recommendation
28	Unfair to increase the cost of meals unless there is an increase in the quality	The proposed price increases reflects more accurately the actual cost of producing a meal.	No recommendation
29	A possible solution is for me to receive a 7 day supply	This option is under consideration as a number of people has expressed a preference for weekly delivery	As column 2
30	How will this effect people with direct payment/need more information about direct payments	Direct payments are already available for people with an eligible need for day care as an alternative to attending a day centre	As column 2
31	This may effect some groups more than others e.g. the most elderly and certain ethnic groups	An Equality Impact Assessment will help to establish any potential groups that will be	An improvement plan will include actions required to address any potentially

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No.	Comment	Commentary	Recommendation
		disadvantaged if changes are made to current services.	adversely effected groups.