

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No 18

meeting date: 26 MARCH 2013
title: MEALS ON WHEELS AND LUNCHEON CLUBS UPDATE
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide members with an update on the latest developments on the meals on wheels and luncheon club provision that this council and Lancashire County Council currently financially support.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A number of reports have been brought to this committee over past years, highlighting to members that there may be changes to the manner in which Lancashire County Council may be looking to fund or support the meals on wheels and luncheon clubs.
- 2.2 Lancashire County Council (LCC) have historically funded district Councils using the meals and recreation grant to support the running of day and luncheon clubs within their areas.
- 2.3 The Health and Social Security Adjudication Act 1983 set out the details of the grant. Under that Act, it grants district authorities a discretionary power to support *'any voluntary organisation whose activities consist in or include the provision of meals or recreation for old people'*.
- 2.4 The grant is claimed in arrears based on 50% of this Council's Meals on Wheels and Luncheon Club net expenditure up to a ceiling calculated using the pensionable population of the borough and a per capita multiplier.
- 2.5 Currently the personalised social care team at LCC provide people with a choice of meals on wheels provision, such as the service provided by WRVS (which this Council help subsidise), Icare or others such as Wiltshire Farm Foods. Referrals to the WRVS service have dropped significantly as historically the criteria for accessing the WRVS service is that citizens must meet the 'Fair Access to Care Services' criteria which means that they now only refer individuals with substantial and critical need; they no longer refer individuals with moderate need.
- 2.6 This Council only provides financial support towards the provision of the Meals on Wheels service within the borough **where meals are still provided by the WRVS**. Meals are produced by external suppliers and then delivered by the WRVS volunteers. As part of our costs we also pay a grant of £9,580 to the WRVS for the running of their services. No financial support is given by the council towards Icare or Wiltshire Farm Foods.
- 2.7 The WVRS currently provide five meals on wheels services, which operate in Billington, Chipping, Clitheroe, Hurst Green and Mellor which in 2011/12 provided 5,230 hot meals to 29 individuals, compared to 2010/11 when 7,670 hot meals were provided to 40 individuals. We have recently been informed that of those currently receiving meals on wheels through the WRVS, only 9 would now qualify due to the changing criteria. A charge of £1.50 is made to the recipients of each meal.

2.8 With regard to the luncheon clubs that are financially supported by this council, it is unknown at this stage how many recipients benefit from this service.

3 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

3.1 The revised estimate for the net cost for the meals on wheels and luncheon club service for 2012/13 is £27,980 before receiving the 50% grant of £13,990 from LCC.

3.2 Ribble Valley also financially supports five luncheon clubs operating in Chatburn, Clitheroe, Mellor, Ribchester and Whalley. The Whalley luncheon club is operated by the WRVS. The revised estimated net cost for the luncheon clubs for 2012/13 is £5,730 before receiving the 50% grant of £2,870 from LCC.

3.3 This council have no direct involvement in the provision of the services and our involvement is very much from a financial administration perspective, although some assistance has been given to the WRVS in the past in sourcing suppliers of meals for the meals on wheels service.

3.4 In 2010, LCC Adult and Community Services Directorate undertook a review of its well-being and prevention services. This highlighted the current position of the historic meals and recreation grant. Mainly that:

- District councils claim the grant in arrears, with the amounts claimed varying from area to area.
- Not all District Councils claim for the grant and this can vary from year to year.
- The grant is a finance transaction and no LCC commissioners are linked to the grant, it currently sits outside any LCC commissioning plans.
- LCC have no involvement in the service provided.

4 PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

4.1 A meeting was recently held with LCC on 11 February 2013, where they provided information on the future funding proposals for the council and the meals on wheels and luncheon clubs provision.

4.2 At this meeting LCC clearly stated that the current on-going grant arrangements were not sustainable over the longer term, however they were looking at ways in which to help existing services, or alternatives, to become financially self-sustainable over the coming year or two.

4.3 They were very keen to ensure that the work of the WRVS continued and were looking to put pump-priming short term investment in well-being and prevention services that:

- Meet the needs of the community;
- Are strong and provide a sustainable offer;
- Equitable, accessible, affordable for local citizens;
- Utilise local buildings and resources such as village halls, churches, schools etc.;
- Engage and provide a service for more local people;
- Utilise the LCC and RVBC investment much better;
- Support the voluntary sector;
- Provide better choice for local people

- 4.4 Within the next few months LCC in partnership with WRVS are looking to undertake a 'needs analysis' in order to better understand how the current joint LCC and Ribble Valley investment is being used and the level of difference that the investment is making to those who receive the benefit of the services provided.
- 4.5 Any 'needs analysis' would also allow both council's to assess what citizens currently think about the services that are provided through the funding given, and help identify any gaps, needs and demands of the services within the Ribble Valley area.
- 4.6 Once this information is available, it is anticipated that both council's would work jointly with the Third Sector (i.e. voluntary organisations) in order to help develop the currently grant funded services that are offered by them.
- 4.7 In order to help facilitate this work it is anticipated that the council's Partnership Officer would work together with LCC staff as the council's strategic representative and that a jointly agreed approach would be taken with a set of agreed actions for any future Third Sector development.
- 4.8 Until such changes are brought in to place, it is anticipated that existing service arrangements will continue, whilst a clear agreement between LCC and RVBC takes place and a future plan has been established.
- 4.9 In developing future Third Sector services it is recognised that local people, partners and elected members will need to be involved in the design of services, and that both LCC and RVBC internal processes would need to be followed.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Lancashire County Council have given a clear indication that over the longer term they are likely to withdraw the grant funding that this council currently receive towards the meals on wheels and luncheon club provision within the borough as it is anticipated that LCC investment will be used in a different way based on the needs analysis and proposed set of actions mentioned above. They have given written confirmation that the funding that we currently receive (£17,920 RVBC 2013/14 budget) will continue for the 2013/14 financial year, but no commitment has yet been made for the future.
- 5.2 The County Council have given their commitment towards helping ensure the longer term self-sustainability of Third Sector organisations such as the WRVS (with whom discussions have already been held), and have indicated that there may be pump-priming short term investment from LCC available.
- 5.3 A needs analysis is to be undertaken by LCC in collaboration with RVBC to identify what the needs of the borough's residents are and to assess the benefits received from the current arrangements.
- 5.4 Ribble Valley have a large proportion of elderly residents and the meals on wheels and luncheon clubs are a valuable service to these residents. I therefore intend to also bring this matter to the attention of the Council's Health and Wellbeing Working Group for their consideration
- 5.5 Further reports will be brought back to this committee as the review work by LCC and this Council develops.

SENIOR ACCOUNTANT
PF26-13/TH/AC
15 March 2013
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DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES