

Decision maker:	Director of adults and communities
Decision date:	Wednesday 14 October 2020
Title of report:	Provide an outreach kitchen and meal service to local residents from existing resource at the Hillside Care Centre, Hereford
Report by:	Local Enterprise and Resources Manager

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

Redhill

Purpose

To approve the provision of a community meals outreach service from the Hillside Care Centre, Pentwyn Avenue, Hereford, to local residents, utilising existing employee and infrastructure resources.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) the council utilises the kitchen at the Hillside Care Centre, to provide a meals outreach service to local residents, using existing employee and infrastructure resources.**

Alternative options

1. Do nothing: the catering service is part of the existing Hillside Care Centre ("**Hillside**") operations to provide meals to the residents. It has the capacity within the current resource and infrastructure to provide a meals outreach service, therefore by doing

nothing and not exploring this further would be a lost opportunity to offer nutritional meals to the local community.

Key considerations

2. The re-opening of Hillside is part of a strategic plan to provide suitable premises for health and social care services to support the county's response to the coronavirus outbreak and longer term discharge to assess function. As part of the services currently offered at Hillside, there is a fully equipped catering kitchen, providing three meals every day to residents. There is scope to increase meal provision to the wider community. The meal price will cover the cost of the food and a contribution to the overheads of using the kitchen at Hillside, in line with the Council's charging policy. The initial offer will be based on 30 two course meals for Thursday to Saturday and 40 two course meals for Sunday, with the potential to increase the number of days subject to demand and capacity. Meals will be offered both for collection and volunteer delivery, with potential volunteers already identified. Both options will follow relevant Public Health Covid-19 guidance and comply with regulatory requirements. Volunteers may be required for the delivery service.
3. The number of residents in the community benefitting from the service will be dependent on the overall take-up. If there is full take-up there will be a minimum of 40 beneficiaries, but is likely to be more, as not all beneficiaries will have a meal every day it is offered. Marketing of the service will be done through a leaflet drop to local residents, to ascertain demand, with the area of operation expanded depending on demand. The area surrounding Hillside has the highest density population in the county. There is an opportunity to increase access to nutritious meals for local residents particularly those living alone. In addition there is sheltered accommodation next to Hillside which could benefit from the implementation of an outreach kitchen. This facility could also be scaled up to provide additional meals if needed to respond to an increased demand such as social isolation issues. The majority of the resources required are already approved as part of the re-opening of the Hillside Centre. Additional production costs will be included in the price to be charged for the meals. A booking system will be put in place at minimal outlay.
4. There will be regular reviews of how successful the service is, evaluated by number of meals served per week, number of residents using and reusing the service, as well as feedback from beneficiaries of the service. Outcomes which may arise from the project are more people supported to live independently, reduced risk of malnutrition, people better connected within their local community. If this project is successful then the option for rolling it out further across the county will be considered and be subject to further decision making.

Community impact

5. This project is part of the Talk Community programme which is a system wide partnership approach focused on managing demand by linking three fundamental elements that promote and maximise independence and wellbeing within Herefordshire's communities. Talk Community therefore focuses on the strengths of people and communities; the place and space which those communities occupy; and the economy in which those communities work. It is a strategic approach that is live, iterative, dynamic and agile so that it supports business as usual but can respond to emergencies if and when they arise and can be the transformational platform for Herefordshire's communities. Talk Community in its implementation is proportionate and focused on those in most need: it is about people not systems with activity targeted according to

where need presents itself and where a health and wellbeing focus is required. The proposal within this report is part of the Talk Community approach and fits well with the County Plan 2020 – 2024 ambition to strengthen communities to ensure that everyone lives well and safely together.

Environmental Impact

6. The council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
7. The development of this project has sought to minimise any adverse environmental impact and will actively seek opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance. As far as possible this proposal will utilise existing resources. As it is based within the community it serves, it is anticipated that the majority of trips will be done by walking and other sustainable travel options. The kitchen will seek to use locally sourced food and recycled products wherever possible.

Equality duty

8. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
9. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). In particular, the council must have 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty when taking any decisions on service changes. The decision to provide an outreach kitchen at Hillside will demonstrate the council's commitment to equality, as many of the beneficiaries will have a protected characteristic. Statistics for the Broadleys lower super output area in which Hillside is located, show that 15% or 206 residents are over the age of 65 (2017 figures) and 16% of all residents have a limiting long-term illness.

Resource implications

10. It is anticipated that there will be a small initial outlay cost of about £2,500. The project will utilise existing ICT, property and human resources.

11. Meal charges will be fixed in accordance with the council's charging policy which is based on full cost recovery when setting fees and charges. The council uses these principles to develop the market, increase personal choice where appropriate and to influence behaviour to achieve policy aims. Subsidies, fees and charges which are in line with the agreed policy, do not require consultation and fall within the existing delegations to officers in consultation with relevant cabinet members.
12. The income from the meals will go back into the Hillside budget to offset the costs of providing the meals along with a contribution to the overheads of producing these meals from the Hillside kitchen.

Legal implications

13. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 sets out the council's general power of competence meaning that the council has the power to anything that individuals generally may do. This general power means that the council has the power to utilise the facilities at Hillside Care Centre to produce extra meals over and above those required for the residents at the care centre for collection and delivery.
14. There is no statutory duty on the council to provide a delivery or collection meal service to older and vulnerable residents of Herefordshire, either for free or for a charge. However if the council decides to offer and provide such a service then section 14 of the Care Act 2014 ("the Care Act") provides the power for the council to charge for the service on the basis that it considers the provision of meals to be a care and support service.
15. The Herefordshire Council Adult and Well-Being Care and Support Charging Policy approved on 30 March 2016 sets out the council's approach to charging and how and when charges will be made with the objective of being clear and transparent about what individuals receiving support will be charged. Any charges made for a meal service will be in accordance with this policy.

Risk management

16. Risks with this project are limited as follows. There are no financial risks, as the project is using existing resources at Hillside, with minimal set up costs and any ongoing costs met by income generated from the sale of the meals. There will be well-trained and experienced catering staff in the kitchen and all regulations on food safety associated for take-away food will be complied with. By developing an incremental and local marketing strategy, any reputational risks to the council will be minimal. Local market research indicates that the number of organisations providing affordable take away meals similar to the Hillside offer, particularly in response to the Covid 19 crisis, is reducing. As this fulfilled a demand in the over 65 age group it is likely that there will be sufficient market for the meals at Hillside. There are some national commercial competitors and a limited number of Hereford meals on wheels type services. It is unlikely that the Hillside offer will be large enough and of the type to adversely impact on these businesses or the local commercial take aways.

Consultees

17. Consultation has taken place with the local ward member, who fully endorses the proposed project and has offered his practical support to implement the proposal.

Appendices

None

Background papers

None identified