

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

### DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

**Graham Gibbens, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health**

### DECISION NO:

15/00045

For publication

### Key decision\*

Affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions

**Subject: Award for Kent community hot meals contract**

### Decision to be taken:

As Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health I:

- a) **AWARD** the Kent community hot meals delivery contract to the preferred bidder identified in the exempt appendix to this report, once the negotiations described are successfully concluded; and
- b) **AGREE** that the Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, or other suitable delegated officer, undertake the necessary actions to implement this decision.

### Reasons for decision:

The Kent wide contract for community hot meals delivery was awarded in 2006 and has already been extended 4 times. Advice is that this contract must now be re-tendered.

The existing contract is linked to volume. The decline in numbers of people requiring the service has led to KCC being charged more as unit cost was linked to set volumes. It was therefore decided to tender for a contract in which KCC will pay a unit price per meal and this would not be linked to set volumes.

### Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision was discussed by the Adult Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee on 10 July 2015:

Officers introduced the report and explained that the provider to whom it was proposed to award the contract had been the only bidder and was currently negotiating with the County Council about unit price and volume. It was hoped that these negotiations would soon be successfully concluded. It was important to fix a fair price for the customer and secure terms which were favourable to the County Council. Officers clarified the type of meals which would be provided by the contract; frozen meals which would be reheated in a van on the way to the customer's home. This was an essential service for those customers for whom no other options were available, eg those who could not use a microwave.

Officers responded to comments and questions from Members, as follows:-

- a) the length of contract was part of the current negotiations. The provider favoured a longer contract of three or five years but a decision on length would be made once calculations around unit price had been completed;
- b) although the County Council had not had the opportunity to make a comparison and choice between several bidders, it was emphasised that the range of catering options and

- products available in the market meant that customers would not miss out on having some choice of product, supplier and price;
- c) one Member said he had visited the bidder's factory and been impressed with the production process;
- d) in some areas of Kent there was already much competition among providers, including local supermarkets, to deliver to residents, eg those in sheltered housing developments, and the need for another meals contract in those areas was questioned. Ms Hanson confirmed that micro-provision was more advanced in East Kent than in West and reminded Members that the contract currently under discussion aimed to help those customers for whom other options were not suitable. Officers added that some customers needed to have hot meals delivered for a limited period of time, eg after returning home from hospital, and the service able to be offered to this group of customers was a small but important part of a hot meals service. The unit price being negotiated was more cost-effective than paying a carer to visit a customer to prepare a hot meal; and
- e) it was suggested that day centres currently offering a hot meals service could extend their service further afield, but another speaker added that some such concerns would be unable to compete on volume and price as they operated as charities.

The Committee resolved that the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, to:

- a) award the Kent community hot meals delivery contract, to commence on 1 October 2015\*, to the preferred bidder identified in the exempt appendix, once the negotiations described are successfully concluded; and
- b) agree that the Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, or other suitable delegated officer, undertake the necessary actions to implement this decision,

be endorsed.

**\*Additional Note:** Following the 10 July Adult Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee discussion the necessary contract negotiations took longer than originally expected. Consequently, to ensure continuity of supply to those who depend on the service, a temporary extension of the existing contract was undertaken from 1 October 2015 to 31 January 2016 and the proposed new contract with the preferred bidder (named in the exempt appendix to the attached report) will start on 1 February 2016.

**Any alternatives considered:**

**End the community meals delivery contract**

This option would have meant that for those people who are currently in receipt of a delivered hot meal, KCC would need to provide an alternative arrangement such as replacing with a lunchtime domiciliary care call to prepare a meal, which would be significantly more expensive.

**Extend the current community meals delivery contract**

This would have meant that KCC could potentially be open to legal challenge due to non-compliance with procurement law. This option also did not provide value for money for KCC due to the decline in volume being likely to continue.

**Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:**

  
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signed

6 June 2016  
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date