

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member



REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER


Executive Decision Reference Number – HASC01 25/26

Decision	
1	Title of decision: Community Meals Service
2	Decision maker: Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care)
3	Report author and contact details: Andrea Langman, Commissioning Officer andrea.langman@plymouth.gov.uk
4	Decision to be taken: To cease the Council subsidy to CATERed for the provision of a community meals service with effect from 28 February 2026; the likely consequence of this will be that CATERed will have to cease providing the community meals service.
5	Reasons for decision: 1. To ensure that the Council is not acting in a way which is not in accordance with its duties under the Care Act 2014. 2. To avoid the poor value for public money associated with continued expenditure from the Council's adult social care budget to subsidise the provision of community meals.
6	Alternative options considered and rejected: 1. Formally commission a provider who can deliver a financially sustainable community meals service in Plymouth; this option has previously been explored and found to be unviable. 2. Do nothing and continue Council subsidy of community meals for all customers.
7	Financial implications and risks: 1. The cessation of Council subsidy for the community meals service will take effect on 28 February 2026; this will reduce expenditure from the Council's adult social care budget by approximately £18,000 in 2025/26 and approximately £216,000 per year from 2026/27 onwards. There is a high risk that removal of the subsidy will mean that CATERed are unable to maintain the service; without the Council subsidy, the service is likely to be financially unsustainable. 2. In the event that CATERed determine that it is unable to put the community meals service on a financially sustainable footing, and therefore decides to discontinue provision of the service beyond 28 February 2026, CATERed will need to establish whether its staff involved in the service can be redeployed internally. If this is not possible, there will be financial implications for CATERed in relation to potential redundancy costs. If CATERed is unable to meet those one-off costs, they will ultimately be underwritten by the Council. Those costs would be less than the savings to the Council achieved through cessation of the subsidy.

	<p>3. It is likely that at least some community meals customers have very limited social contact / visitors other than CATERed delivery drivers, and therefore their visits can act as a 'welfare' check, with the drivers contacting family members or adult social care if they have any concerns about individuals. In the event that CATERed decides to discontinue provision of the service beyond 28 February 2026, the Council will work with CATERed to ensure that information provided to customers in advance includes details of local befriending and 'good neighbour' schemes, as well as contact details for adult social care if any individuals are concerned that they will require additional support with ordering and/or reheating chilled/frozen meals at home and wish to request an assessment or reassessment of their own support needs and/or those of any unpaid carers.</p> <p>4. In the event that CATERed decides to discontinue provision of the community meals service, this could potentially result in some increases to adult social care packages or requests for assessment, from amongst the 150 current customers.</p>			
8	<p>Legal Implications: Under section 2 of the Care Act 2014, local authorities are required to take steps to prevent or delay the development of care and support needs, which may include utilising existing services, facilities, and resources in their area. While this duty is mandatory, the Act does not specify that community meals services must be provided towards that end.</p>			
9	<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)</p> <p>Please type an X into the relevant boxes</p>	Yes	No	Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:
			X	in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total
			X	in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1million annually
			X	is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.
	If yes, date of publication of the notice in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions	N/A		
10	Please specify how this decision is linked to the Council's corporate plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget:	The decision supports the Council's Corporate Plan commitment to spend money wisely.		
11	Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)	None anticipated.		
Urgent decisions				
12a	Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public?	Yes		(If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice)
		No	X	(If no, go to section 13a)

	Please type an X into the relevant box			
I2b	Reason for urgency:			
I2c	Scrutiny Chair Signature:		Date	
	Scrutiny Committee name:			
	Print Name:			
Consultation				
I3a	Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision?	Yes		
	Please type an X into the relevant box	No	X	(If no go to section I4)
I3b	Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?	N/A		
I3c	Date Cabinet member consulted	N/A		
I4	Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision?	Yes		If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer
	Please type an X into the relevant box	No	X	
I5	Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?	Name	Gary Walbridge	
		Job title	Strategic Director for Adults, Health and Communities	
		Date consulted	04 November 2025	
Sign-off				
I6	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:	Democratic Support (mandatory)	JS46 25/26	
		Finance (mandatory)	OW.25.26.099	
		Legal (mandatory)	LS/4552(09)/RH/201125	
		Procurement (if applicable)	N/A	
		Corporate property (decisions involving Council owned land or facilities) (if applicable)	N/A	

		Human Resources (if applicable)	CS.25.26.018						
Appendices									
17	Ref.	Title of appendix							
	A	Cessation of Council subsidy for Community Meals Service Briefing Paper – Part I							
	B	Cessation of Council subsidy for Community Meals Service Briefing Paper – Part II							
	C	Cessation of Council subsidy for Community Meals Service Equalities Impact Assessment							
Confidential/exempt information									
18a	Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information? Please type an X into the relevant box		Yes	X	If yes, prepare a second, confidential ('Part II') briefing report and indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in 18b below. (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain)				
			No						
			Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18b	Confidential/exempt briefing report title: B - Cessation of Council subsidy for Community Meals Service Briefing Paper – Part II			X	X				
Background Papers									
19	Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.								
Title of background paper(s)			Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cabinet Member Signature									
20	I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act (2010) and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached.								

Signature		Date of decision	03/12/2025
Print Name	Councillor Mary Aspinall (Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care)		