

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ADULT CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN' S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	4 OCTOBER 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	7
TITLE:	CEDAR COURT AND THE MAPLES DAY CENTRE CATERING		
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This information report provides the Committee with an update on the great progress made to provide catering to Cedar Court and The Maples.
- 1.2 The transition from White Oaks to Constant Catering Services has been a success; it has offered better outcomes for residents and saved a significant amount of money, while also preserving the service that is so important for residents and service users.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 In March 2018 the decision was made to enter into a one year contract with Constant Catering Services, a local micro-business, to provide the catering at Cedar Court and the Maples. This was to replace the catering service that ended on 30th April 2018.
- 3.2 £10,000 was awarded to Constant Catering Services to help with start-up costs and to ensure the business was sustainable and in line with service delivery to older people who required a balanced meal daily. This was a one-off cost.

4. THE PROPOSAL/UPDATE

4.1 Current Position/Background Information:

- 4.1.1 After the previous catering contract fulfilled by 'White Oaks' (part of the Compass Group) came to an end on 30th April, the Council entered into a contract with a micro-business, 'Constant Catering Services' to provide the catering to Cedar Court Extra Care scheme and The Maples Day Service. This company is owned and run by the previous head chef at Cedar Court. The service provided is largely unchanged from that provided by the previous contractor and therefore as far as possible fulfilled the wishes of residents (as received via formal consultation) for there to be no change to the service provided.
- 4.1.2 Catering services at Oak Tree House Extra Care scheme are now provided by another micro-business (owned by the previous head chef at this scheme) arranged by Catalyst Housing as the landlord at this scheme. The Council's only involvement was to ensure that this service would provide residents with access to food 7 days a week. There is no ongoing involvement from the Council.
- 4.1.3 The contract with 'Constant Catering Services' (CCS) represented excellent value for money compared to other options explored to provide this service, or provide support in the absence of any service. An agreed sum of £10,000 was paid to CCS for the contract, due to expire on 30th April 2019, to assist with start-up costs. At the expiry of this contract the service should be self-sufficient requiring no further funding or input from the Council.

4.2 The Proposal/Current Position

- 4.2.1 The service commenced seamlessly on 1st May 2018 so residents at Cedar Court and service users at The Maples did not receive any break in service. Residents and visitors to Cedar Court continue to receive the option of a two course hot meal 7 days a week. People living at The Maples continue to receive a hot meal hot boxed to the service on each operating day (Monday-Friday). CCS provides an additional service of transporting the meals cooked at Cedar Court to The Maples. This service was previously provided by a taxi company for an additional cost.
- 4.2.2 People accessing the service were informed of minor changes to the service, including changes to the tariff. There have been no objections raised in regards to the changes.
- 4.2.3 During the first week of the new service, Commissioners contacted colleagues from Cedar Court and The Maples for feedback on the transition to the new service. The Maples reported the following:

'Yes, no problems. Food same quality, arrived on time and no food missing.'

The Sheltered Housing manager also reported that everyone at Cedar Court was happy.
- 4.2.4 To date, the Commissioning Team has not received any concerns regarding the service or any reports of any break in service.

4.2.5 A representative from the Commissioning Team arranged to visit Cedar Court on 3rd August to review the service. Prior to this an update was sought from the Manager of The Maples, and the following response was received:

'The new arrangement with the Maples is working really well and any feedback given regarding the menu i.e. what clients like/not like Cornelius has taken on board and changed.'

4.2.6 At the visit to Cedar Court on 3rd August, the Commissioner met with the Sheltered Housing Officer at Cedar Court and Director of CCS. It was evident that CCS was continuously striving to improve the service to ensure that it remains sustainable. CCS has implemented a system whereby those that eat at the restaurant regularly pay monthly upfront. By doing this they are entitled to 2 free Sunday meals each month. They pay £148 a month (less if they do not want a pudding). This enables CCS to plan meals (taking into account a number of people who pay as they go) and reduces waste.

4.2.7 This was introduced following full consultation with residents via the Residents meeting and was supported by Housing Officers who helped to explain to residents that this would help the business to be sustainable and therefore more likely that they can continue to benefit from it. Residents agreed that meals can only be cancelled/refunded with 7 days' notice (including hospital admissions) to enable CCS to cater effectively.

4.2.8 This payment method is to be reviewed at the next Residents meeting in September. The service appears to be working well. CCS is now looking to introduce a set monthly payment date to reduce the need to chase any payments.

4.2.9 The Housing Officer reported that residents were very happy with the food. CCS is also putting on special events to encourage new customers. For example a BBQ was arranged for 8th August at additional cost of £1.50 per person. The Housing Officer also reported that CCS has introduced a cold meat buffet every other Saturday which has proved really popular.

4.2.10 The Housing Officer did report that Age UK had reduced their Saturday sessions from 3 to 2 per month due to lack of volunteers but this does not seem to be having a significant impact. Age UK continue to access the restaurant every Wednesday for their lunch club.

4.2.11 The Director reported that everything was going smoothly, including invoicing for The Maples and those supported by the Deputies Office. The Commissioner observed the weekly menu which showed a good variety of food on offer. On the day of the visit it was the popular 'Fish and Chips Friday' so the restaurant appeared well used. It was also evident that the Director was planning quantities well as there were no chips left at the end of service!

4.2.12 The Director of CCS discussed plans to expand his business, including currently interviewing for some additional weekend support. CCS is also in the process of considering tenders for other catering services. The Director has informed the Commissioner that has a 2nd chef ready to utilise should he be successful.

4.3 Other Options Considered/Next Steps

4.3.1 All other options that were explored can be found in the reports from March 2018.

4.3.2 The transition from White Oaks to Constant Catering Services has been a success, saving the Council a significant amount of money in Subsidy and Tax costs, while also preserving the service that is so important for residents and service users. A financially sustainable catering service is provided to individuals to whom the Council has a statutory duty and to those for whom we have a duty of care under the Care Act 2014. With the potential for CCS to increase business to other schemes in the area it is anticipated that this will be a sustainable long term solution.

4.3.3 It is believed that this innovative solution to meeting the catering needs within an extra care scheme demonstrates a best practice model. We would therefore look to replicate this model or extend this service to or in other extra care schemes should the need arise.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The contract to provide catering to Cedar Court and The Maples is contributing to the following Council strategic aims.

1. Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable;
2. Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 A 12 week consultation into the future of catering services in Extra Care and the Maples ran from October 2017 to January 2018 and the feedback informed the decision taken to continue to provide a catering service.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken when the decision was made following the consultation. No further EIA is required as this is just an update report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 No decisions or legal input is required from this update report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Constant Catering Services were awarded a one off payment of £10,000 for the life of the contract. It is anticipated the service will not require any financial support from the Council. Therefore there are no future costs associated with this decision and contract.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 The information for this report contains detail protected to the provider in question.