

6.1 UPDATE ON MANNA INC. MEAL SERVICE AT WELD SQUARE

Attachments: Nil

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. **APPROVES** an extension to the Manna Inc.'s meal service at Weld Square for a period of three months until 28 February 2021; subject to the following conditions:
 - 1.1 Hours of operation shall remain between 1:30pm and 2:15pm on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays and between 12:30pm and 1:15pm on Tuesdays;
 - 1.2 Manna Inc. shall ensure that service provision practices minimise impacts and disturbance to nearby amenities, businesses and residences;
 - 1.3 Relevant Manna Inc. staff and volunteers are required to attend an information session with City of Vincent, outreach services and WA Police Force representatives before the end of 2020, to re-affirm expectations and protocols;
 - 1.4 Manna Inc. shall ensure that actions identified by City of Vincent, WA Police Force and outreach providers to deter anti-social behaviour are implemented in a timely manner;
 - 1.5 Manna Inc. shall provide the City of Vincent, WA Police Force and outreach providers with the details of a representative who is contactable during both office hours and after hours;
 - 1.6 No more than one Manna Inc. vehicle is authorised to access Weld Square during the meal service;
 - 1.7 Manna Inc. vehicles shall enter Weld Square via the Newcastle Street crossover and provide the meal service on the north-western side of the park;
 - 1.8 Manna Inc. staff and volunteers shall pick up all rubbish and litter associated with the meal service prior to leaving Weld Square;
 - 1.9 Manna Inc. shall maintain Public Liability Insurance coverage for a minimum of \$20 million and indemnify the City of Vincent against any accident, injury or damage resulting from their use of Weld Square; and
 - 1.10 The City of Vincent may withdraw approval for the Manna Inc. meal service to operate from Weld Square at its sole discretion.
2. **APPROVES** a waiver of reserve hire fees for Manna Inc. to provide a free meal service for a further three months at Weld Square.
3. **NOTES** the demographic information obtained during a recent survey conducted in September 2020 of those currently accessing the Weld Square meal service; and that Administration are currently working with service providers to determine further targeted support available for each cohort identified;
4. **NOTES** that Administration continues to work with Manna Inc. and other stakeholders to explore opportunities to transition the Manna Inc. meal service from Weld Square and/or continue to support the needs of meal service clients
5. **NOTES** that Administration will work with Manna Inc. and other stakeholders to ensure that this change in service provision and associated transitional arrangements are communicated and managed appropriately.
6. **NOTES** that Administration will not consider any applications for additional goods and

services for people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness at Weld Square.

7. **NOTES that Administration will report back to Council in April 2021 to provide an update on the transition of Manna Inc. from Weld Square and associated outcomes.**

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To receive the update on Manna Inc.'s meal service at Weld Square and consider Manna's Inc's application to continue providing a meal service at Weld Square for another 12 months.

BACKGROUND:

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 15 September 2020, Council resolved:

"That Council:

1. *NOTES this update on the status of the Manna Inc. Meal Service at Weld Square;*
2. *NOTES that re-location of the Manna Inc. meal service to Tranby Engagement Hub or the Moore Street Accreditation Trial Site is unlikely at this time, with Manna Inc. expressing concerns that not all of those accessing the meal service identify as homeless, which would still result in the need for service provision in the area;*
3. *NOTES that Administration is currently working with Manna Inc., Uniting WA and other stakeholders to gather further information about the demographics of those accessing the Weld Square meal service to assist in making further recommendations to Council; and*
4. *NOTES that Administration continues to liaise with Manna Inc. and other key stakeholders regarding this matter, and will provide a further update at the 20 October 2020 Ordinary Meeting of Council."*

Manna Inc. is a non-denominational, not-for-profit organisation founded in 1996, who have grown to become one of the largest providers of meals to the homeless and disadvantaged in the metropolitan area.

Manna Inc. moved their free meal service to Weld Square in August 2008 and Council have granted successive twelve month approvals for the use of Weld Square since that time, with a range of associated conditions that aim to address concerns raised by nearby residents, businesses and other stakeholders.

The Manna Inc. meal service at Weld Square consists of about 15% of the charity's total service provision, which also includes school breakfast programs, food and care hamper distribution and provision of meals for distribution at a number of facilities across the metropolitan area.

During the current approval period, there have been many changes to the provision of homeless services in the public realm within the inner city area, in line with the Action Plan of the City Homeless Framework Committee Action Plan in which the City participates.

Of most significance, the City of Perth launched their Moore Street accreditation site early in 2020, to support the coordination of homeless service provision in the city. The Moore Street site currently operates an evening service on weekdays between 4:30pm and 8:00pm, and Sunday mornings between 8:00am and 11:00am, with no plans to expand the service beyond these times at present. The City of Perth is currently re-developing the site with the Public Transport Authority to enhance service provision and amenity for all attending, with the initial twelve month trial ceasing in February 2021.

Uniting WA's Tranby Engagement Hub initially expanded their operating hours to 7am-7pm, seven days a week for a period of twelve months however this has recently ceased. In late 2019, Administration met with both Uniting WA and Manna Inc. to discuss the potential to re-locate the Weld Square meal service to Tranby, however Manna Inc. are concerned that the demographics of their clientele and their needs differs to that of Tranby, and that they have not been able to reduce the need for their service at Weld Square.

The intention to transition Manna Inc. to another location such as Tranby House has not been successful and although that work is still ongoing there is no firm prospect that a relocation will be achieved.

The City received written (email) confirmation from Manna Inc. on 9 October 2020 that they were seeking renewal of their approval to provide a meal service at Weld Square in 2021, whilst they explore potential partnerships with other agencies within the area that may be more aligned to their core services.

DETAILS:

Manna Inc. surveyed regular Weld Square meal service clients between 21-25 September 2020 to better understand the needs and demographics of those who access the service, and assist Administration in making further recommendations to Council.

The survey provided the following insights:

Regular meal service attendees	68
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male – 41 • Female – 25 • Other – 2
Indigenous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No - 48 • Yes – 16 • Unknown – 4
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0-34 years - 17 • 35-54 years – 29 • 55 years and above – 22
Homeless status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not homeless - 28 • Homeless – 25 • Sometimes homeless – 15
Where they reside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Vincent – 24 <i>(19 of these in North Perth)</i> • Outside of the City – 18 <i>(Belmont (6), Maylands (6), Bayswater (2), Carlisle (1), Dog Swamp (1), Two Rocks (1), Victoria Park (1))</i> • Inner City/Perth area – 14 • West Perth and East Perth – 12
Accessed Tranby Engagement Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No - 39 • Yes - 27 <i>(a similar number to those who identified as homeless)</i> • Unknown - 2
Access other food services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No – 44 • Yes – 32 (can provide more than one answer) <i>(Moore Street accreditation site (16), Ruah (5), St Patrick's Fremantle (5), HOPE Church (5), St Alban's Church (1))</i>
Why clients come to Weld Square meal service (other than for food - can provide more than one answer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social opportunity, meeting family and friends – 26 • So that there is money left to pay rent and bills, to make the pension go further – 19 • From overseas and ineligible for other supports - 6

Administration are currently working with Manna Inc. and other stakeholders to identify any further targeted assistance and supports that can be offered to meal service clients at Weld Square, including various COVID-19 relief initiatives for specific groups, including non-Australian residents, those visiting from other areas and those which have identified as housed but in financial distress and not accessing other crisis services and support.

In recent months there has been an increase in anti-social behaviour in Weld Square and there are currently seven rough sleepers using Weld Square. Ending the Manna Inc service will not resolve all antisocial behaviour issues at Weld Square but the situation is likely to improve as this will remove a specific time where people attend Weld Square in a group which can be a flashpoint. It should be noted that antisocial behaviour also occurs outside of the Manna Inc. mealtime time and so it would be difficult to try and predict the exact level of improvement that would be seen.

The City has very recently considered employing a professional security service to be present during mealtimes as there is a public expectation that the City will have a visible presence at these times to provide reassurance. In recent months there has been an increase in anti-social behaviour and for the time being Rangers do not patrol on foot but observe from vehicles. This is an ongoing consideration and would apply to varying degrees depending on which option (discussed below) is selected.

Options appraisal

Administration considered the following four options in relation to the Manna Inc meal service at Weld Square:-

<p>Option 1 – Discontinue the Meal Service as of 30 November 2020</p> <p>This option would involve ending the service at the expiration of the current licence with no extension. It would involve immediately engaging additional outreach services to specifically assist in the transition and to inform users of the service that the service is ending and inform on alternative options.</p>	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns with City Homeless Framework Committee Action Plan objectives • Preferred solution from adjacent businesses/residents • Opportunity to shift the focus of the reserve and activate Public Open Space. • Likely reduction of reports of antisocial behaviour. • Will separate rough sleeping and persons frequenting the area from persons attending area just for meals.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No other dedicated lunch services available with the inner-city immediately accessible as an alternative. • Possible adverse publicity. • Some meals service clients may not feel safe or comfortable accessing other forms of support • Cost of implementing for Outreach (potentially with security) to mitigate risk and manage the transition.
<p>Option 2 – Renew the licence for 12 months with a break February – March 2021</p> <p>This option would result in the continuation of the service for another year with a 2 month break to assess the impact of the meal service being discontinued. It would also enable the City to continue to further assist Manna Inc. in relocating the meal service to another site for a period of up to 12 months.</p>	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of lunchtime services for persons experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. • Extended timeframe for Manna to explore other options. • Enables City to assess impact of service being discontinued.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not align with City Homeless Framework Committee Action Plan objectives. • Continued objections from businesses and residents. • Potential cost of administering security to manage escalating antisocial behaviours. • Challenge in communicating a short break in service to clients and associated services. • Possible adverse publicity • Continued pressure for Council resolution to perception of antisocial behaviours aligning with Manna Services. • Potential cost of security

Option 3 – Extend the licence for 3 months	
This option would involve extending the service for three months beyond the current licence This would enable the City to properly plan the service transition whilst continuing to assist Manna Inc. in relocating the meal service to another site.	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for extended opportunity to communicate transition to persons utilising services • Defined timeframe - can be definitively communicated to businesses and residents. • Transition can be managed in keeping with City Homeless Framework Committee Action Plans and Objectives • Service will continue over summer holiday period when there can be a reduction of other services available.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued management of antisocial behaviour and negative publicity for the 3 months. • May not result in a successful relocation and there is currently no other dedicated lunch services available with the inner-city as an alternative. • Possible adverse publicity. • Some meals service clients may not feel safe or comfortable accessing other forms of support • Cost of implementing for outreach (potentially with security) to mitigate risk and manage the transition.
Option 4 – Extend the licence for 12 months	
This option would enable Administration to continue to assist Manna Inc. in relocating the meal service to another site whilst the current service is maintained.	
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency in service provision • Ongoing support to persons at risk of homelessness and homeless.
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not align with City Homeless Framework Committee Action Plan objectives. • Continued objections from businesses and residents. • Possible adverse publicity • Continued pressure for Council resolution to perception of antisocial behaviours aligning with Manna Services. • Not responsive to feedback received from local Community. • Potential cost of security

Having given careful consideration to the above options, Administration are recommending option 3 as the preferred option. This option aligns with the City's intention to transition the meal service out of Weld Square and allows for a further three months for an orderly transition, clear communication of the intent and to pursue other potential service options.

CONSULTATION/ADVERTISING:

Administration continues to work with Manna Inc., Uniting WA, City of Perth and other key stakeholders regarding homeless service provision in the inner City area and in the referral of those frequenting Weld Square to appropriate services and support.

A communication plan will be developed by Administration to communicate any changes to the Manna Inc. meal service at Weld Square that may occur, to keep clients, other service providers and key stakeholders, outreach services, local businesses and residents informed during the transition.

LEGAL/POLICY:

The following Local Laws and Policies are relevant to the approval of the Manna Inc. meal service:

- City of Vincent Local Government Property Local Law; and
- Council Policy 2.1.7 Parks Reserve and Hall Facilities – Conditions of Hire and Use

The City's commitment to the provision of support to organisations working with people experiencing homelessness and the maintenance of an interagency approach through collaboration with outreach services and other community organisations are key actions of the Safer Vincent Plan 2019/2022 and the Action Plan of the City Homeless Framework Committee in which the City participates.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**Public Safety:**

Medium: Weld Square and the surrounding area experience anti-social behaviour associated with both close proximity to licensed premises and support services, and the prevalence of vulnerable persons at risk of or experiencing homelessness within the inner City area. This cohort often present with complex needs relating to mental health, health, cognitive impairment, drug/alcohol use and trauma. The City continues to work collaboratively with WA Police, outreach services and other stakeholders to manage these risks.

Negative Community Perception:

Medium: There is divided opinion amongst the local community regarding the provision of homelessness services at Weld Square, with some residents and businesses perceiving that anti-social behaviour in the area is linked to service provision at this location.

Service provision:

Medium: There is a risk that a meal service relocation or an alternative suitable service provision will not eventuate if the Manna Inc. service ends.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS:

This is in keeping with the City's *Strategic Community Plan 2018-2028*:

Enhanced Environment

Our parks and reserves are maintained, enhanced and well utilised.

Connected Community

We are an inclusive, accessible and equitable City for all.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

Nil.

FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS:

Any re-location of Manna Inc.'s food service from Weld Square is unlikely to resolve the ongoing need for outreach services in the area, given the large number of support services located within close proximity to this location, and its long history as a meeting place for Aboriginal people in particular.

Uniting WA received an \$85,000 grant through the collaborative grants program to provide an assertive outreach worker for a period of twelve months (which ended in June 2020).

Uniting WA received \$129,000 to provide three months of outreach services (June – August 2020) through the Leederville Gardens Trust (COVID-19 Relief). The grant period was extended to 20 October 2020 due to a late service start.

There is \$50,000 on budget for annual partnership agreement with Nyoongar Outreach Services

Administration has received a new proposal from Uniting WA for a further 12 months outreach to be potentially funded through the Leederville Gardens Trust (COVID-19 Relief).

Administration will also be seeking to engage a dedicated outreach service (potentially with security) to assist in the management of the transition of the service. The specific additional cost is not yet quantified and will depend upon the option selected and will be considered at the November budget review.

COMMENTS:

An extension of Manna Inc.'s food service for a final period of three months enables the City to support service provision over the holiday period (when other services are often closed or reduced).

It will also provide an opportunity for the City to further consider the broader context of Safe Spaces initiatives currently being considered by the Rough Sleeper Advisory Committee and City of Perth Council in late 2019 and the outcomes of the Moore Street Accreditation Site, which completes its first year (trial) of operation in February 2021.

Administration continues to participate in a number of forums focussed on homeless outreach and collaboration, as well as City of Perth led work to identify opportunities and models for safe homeless spaces within the inner City in partnership with the State and broader homeless sector.

In response to a recent increase in anti-social behaviour at Weld Square and the surrounding area, the City continue to work collaboratively with WA Police Force, outreach services and other stakeholders to manage these risks.