



Cabinet

Date:	Monday, 18 February 2013
Time:	6.15 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA 3

4. BUDGET OPTIONS 2013/16 (Pages 1 - 20)

The minutes of the special meetings of the five themed Overview and Scrutiny Committees which considered the results of the budget consultation are attached for the Cabinet's consideration.

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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12 FEBRUARY 2013

64 CONSULTATION FINDINGS: WHAT REALLY MATTERS STAGE 2

The Committee received a presentation from Jane Morgan, Corporate Policy Manager, Chief Executive's Department. Details of the consultation process and consultation findings in relation to each budget option were provided. Members welcomed the diversity of the respondents to the consultation and expressed their thanks to everyone who had taken part in the consultation.

The Children and Young People's O & S Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive in relation to the What Really Matters Stage 2 Consultation that had been considered by the Cabinet on 7 February, 2013.

The Committee was requested to give consideration to the consultation feedback in relation to matters which fell within its remit.

The options were presented in the report, together with the quantitative data gathered through the consultation questionnaire, and a summary of any related comments that had been received through the consultation process.

The Committee considered the relevant options detailed in Appendix 3 of the report – Budget Options Feedback Families and Wellbeing.

COMMISSIONING OF PARENTING SERVICES

The Chair commented that the Committee had received a letter from Wirral Family Forum expressing concerns relating to the delay in commissioning of children with disabilities short breaks funding and the effect this may have on both children using services and also parents/carers who relied on these services.

Officers from the Children and Young People's Department addressed the meeting and gave members an update on the current situation regarding commissioning. Officers gave reassurances that a smooth transition would be enabled by various strategies – the delay in commissioning of one month would support good exit strategies so there would be no confusion amongst families and no gap in provision.

TRANSPORT POLICIES

Officers from the Children and Young People's Department informed the Committee that the proposals affecting children would need to be phased in over time and would follow a full public consultation. Changes would not be effective until at least 2014 - 15 as admission criteria for schools including transport policies have already been published. The proposals would be phased until 2019/20.

AREA TEAMS FOR FAMILY SUPPORT

Julia Hassall, Acting Director of Children's Services commented that this was linked to the whole review of preventative services. Area Teams would be reduced from 7 to 4 that would operate a 'gateway' and family support workers would be grouped behind the 4 Area Teams. Members were reassured that services would not be diluted.

Sue Talbot, Strategic Service Manager - Early Years & Primary Education, Learning & Achievement Branch, commented that there would be no reduction in family support staff and a triage system of support would be put in place that would be more efficient and effective.

Members commented that the public response to this proposal was understandable given that full details and background information was not able to be provided in the consultation document.

SCHOOLS MUSIC SERVICE

Sue Talbot, Strategic Service Manager - Early Years & Primary Education, Learning & Achievement Branch, commented that changes in this area would be very effective and that income would be generated by selling tutors time to small groups or covering PPA time in schools as schools would be paying for this service. Schools were able to use the pupil premium and costs for parents could actually be reduced.

OAKLANDS OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

Members commented that they believed Oaklands to be a valuable resource for young people and expressed concern that children should not be deprived of taking part in activities there.

EDUCATION PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

Julia Hassall, Acting Director of Children's Services, commented that savings would be achieved by taking out a senior vacant post and admin time but was confident that the statutory requirement for undertaking assessments could be met.

FOUNDATION LEARNING

Vivian Stafford Strategic Service Manager- Post 16 Commissioning and Economic Regeneration commented on the work that had been undertaken with schools over the last 2 years. It would be the schools decision whether or not they delivered the programmes in future.

YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICES

Members commented that a number of petitions had been received regarding Youth and Play Services. Julia Hassall, Acting Director of Children's Services gave an update and commented that it was still the intention to retain the Youth Theatre. Members expressed concern over the proposed reduction of outreach teams and

noted that petitions had been received relating to both Moreton and Bebington Youth Clubs. Members also discussed the viability of transport links to enable young people to attend Youth Centres not in their immediate locality.

CHILDREN'S CENTRES AND SURE START

Sue Talbot, Strategic Service Manager - Early Years & Primary Education, Learning & Achievement Branch, commented that there were a lot of misconceptions regarding this proposal as it was wrongly believed that satellite children centres would close. Sue Talbot gave details of the options and commented that the Council would continue with statutory services and that service would not be compromised. It was also noted that further consultations would be required in this area.

CAREERS, EDUCATION INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Vivian Stafford Strategic Service Manager- Post 16 Commissioning and Economic Generation commented that next years contract had just been successfully negotiated. Some Members commented that reassurance was needed as the option in this area was to 'reduce this service so it was targeted at those most in need'.

SHORT BREAKS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Simon Garner, Strategic Service Manager- Childcare, commented on this option and noted that parents were now part of the commissioning panel and that it was now clearer what needs were and providers were able to meet this. Julia Hassall, Acting Director of Children's Services endorsed this and noted that there was a rapid response service from Social Workers.

CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Simon Garner, Strategic Service Manager- Childcare, commented on this option and noted that where there had been different areas there would now be one route in - making this service more speedy and effective. Some members noted with concern that the wording on this option was to 'reduce this service so it is targeted at those most in need'.

Resolved – That:

- (1) The Consultation Findings: What really matters Stage 2 report of the Chief Executive be noted.**
- (2) That this Committee offers thanks to officers and to the people of Wirral who took the time and trouble to take part in the Consultation: What really matters.**

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**COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
14 FEBRUARY 2013**

70 CONSULTATION FINDINGS: WHAT REALLY MATTERS STAGE 2

Further to minutes 29 (6 November 2012), 40 (5 December 2012) and 44 (16 January 2013), the Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive upon the outcome of the What Really Matters Stage 2 Consultation, which had been considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 7 February 2013 (minute 184 refers).

The comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement had been undertaken to inform the development of the Council's Corporate and Financial Plan for 2013-2016 and further to inform the decision making process surrounding significant budget savings. The Cabinet had noted the consultation process and implementation described within the report, and thanked Wirral residents, staff and other stakeholders for their input. Cabinet had also noted the detailed consultation findings in relation to each budget option as contained within Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

The report detailed the consultation findings and provided information in relation to targeted engagement and the methodology for the geographic and demographic analysis that had been undertaken. Key messages were that the Council should protect the vulnerable, retain responsibility for quality and look to raise income and eliminate waste. The Chief Executive had responded personally to all direct communication from members of staff and a team was in place to ensure Equality Impact Assessments, continued engagement and consultation and to show due regard to concerns raised.

Individual views expressed by Members in relation to the general analysis of consultation responses were that, in some instances, the comments did not represent a neutral interpretation; for example, 51% being shown as either strong support for an option or, conversely, being a slight majority against. However, Members noted that the comments were subjective.

The Chair indicated that the use of the word "strongly" was not a clear indication of strong support to the proposals and that the Council should not be exaggerating and misleading the figures.

Mr McCallum indicated that the option summaries were included to provide Members with a snapshot of the proposals. These would not be used by Cabinet to form the basis of their decision making.

The Chair, supported by the Committee suggested that future questionnaire questions be circulated to each Committee to allow Members to comment and give their feedback prior to publication. Mr McCallum agreed to feed this back to the Policy Department.

The Committee was requested to give consideration to the consultation feedback in relation to the following specific items, which fell within its remit and the Chair

proposed that individual views expressed by Members could form the basis of feedback to Budget Cabinet –

1. Reducing Council Management

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

2. Workforce Conditions of Service

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

3. Procurement

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

4. Treasury Management

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

5. Rationalisation of Civic Services

In response to Members, Mr McCallum indicated that information regarding the options were shared with the public and further details on the options was given to this Committee in November 2012.

The Chair indicated that in relation to the reduction of mayoral visits, this was a very popular function which generated a lot of money raised for charity and that he felt should not be looked at as part of the budget savings.

Individual Members commented that although the function was indeed welcomed by the public and it raised a lot of money for charity, some public perceptions differ and in the current climate may not be classed as an essential service to retain.

Surjit Tour, Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management indicated that this option was not looking to reduce mayoral visits, but the additional costs, i.e. overtime and extra mayoral car.

Mr Tour indicated that originally the Council had two chauffeurs and two cars to transport the mayor and deputy to functions, this had now reduced to one chauffeur so the service would now have to look at the budget provision and manage visits within this. Security was an important issue in relation to undertaking mayoral visits; this would have to be given careful consideration.

The Committee noted this option.

6. Moving to Four Yearly Elections

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

7. Reducing the Cost of Democracy

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

8. Information Technology Service

In response to Members, Mr McCallum explained that this option covers both employees and Members and the option detailed the proposal to replace the current I.T Strategy.

In relation I.T equipment, Members indicated that at present their equipment was not fit for purpose. Councillor Whittingham indicated that in relation to Members using their own equipment, this had been discussed at the Members Equipment Steering Group and there were security issues to be considered.

Mr Tour indicated that in relation to security we have to comply with the requirement of the Government Connect.

Members indicated that they had recently been given a demonstration of a tablet with a key board which was not suitable. Councillor Whittingham reiterated that no Member would be receiving an I Pad; however WiFi would be made available in the Town Hall.

The Committee noted this option.

9. Public Relations and Marketing

The Chair commented that in view of the significant benefits of tourism to Wirral for e.g. the Hoylake Open Day and the need to build on the momentum, the Cabinet should consider carefully the impact of removing subsidies for tourism events.

The Committee noted this option.

10. Area Forum

The Chair indicated that the Democracy Working Group were working on this.

The Committee noted this option.

11. Better Use of Buildings

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

12. Transforming Business Support

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

13. Restructure of Law, HR and Asset Management

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

14. Revenues and Benefits

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

15. Increasing Court Costs

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

16. Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

17. Council Tax Pensioner Discount

The Committee indicated that they had no further comments and noted this option

18. Council Tax Discretionary Rate Relief

The Chair indicated that he was unclear as to the proposals the Cabinet would be considering in relation to this and that this may result in businesses closing.

Resolved – That the Cabinet be requested to have due regard to the views expressed in relation to those budget options within the remit of the Council Excellence O&S Committee.

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 12 FEBRUARY 2013

52 CONSULTATION FINDINGS: WHAT REALLY MATTERS STAGE 2

Further to minutes 29 (6 November 2012), 40 (5 December 2012) and 44 (16 January 2013), the Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive upon the outcome of the What Really Matters Stage 2 Consultation, which had been considered by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 7 February 2013 (minute 184 refers).

The comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement had been undertaken to inform the development of the Council's Corporate and Financial Plan for 2013-2016 and further to inform the decision making process surrounding significant budget savings. The Cabinet had noted the consultation process and implementation described within the report, and thanked Wirral residents, staff and other stakeholders for their input. Cabinet had also noted the detailed consultation findings in relation to each budget option as contained within Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

The Council's Corporate Performance Manager gave a brief presentation on the consultation findings and provided information in relation to targeted engagement and the methodology for the geographic and demographic analysis that had been undertaken. Key messages were that the Council should protect the vulnerable, retain responsibility for quality and look to raise income and eliminate waste. The Chief Executive had responded personally to all direct communication from members of staff and a team was in place to ensure Equality Impact Assessments, continued engagement and consultation and to show due regard to concerns raised.

Individual views expressed by Members in relation to the general analysis of consultation responses were that, in some instances, the comments did not represent a neutral interpretation; for example, 51% being shown as either strong support for an option or, conversely, being a slight majority against. However, Members accepted the accuracy of the figures and noted that the comments were subjective.

The Committee was requested to give consideration to the consultation feedback in relation to the following specific items, which fell within its remit and the Chair proposed that individual views expressed by Members could form the basis of feedback to Budget Cabinet –

- **Public Relations and Marketing**

There were a number of options in this area, including a reduction in the core marketing budget of 50%, stopping the sponsorship of Tranmere Rovers Football Club, which would bring a saving of £135,000 and removing the funding which was used to subsidise tourism and visitor events throughout the Borough.

Members commented that in view of the significant benefits of tourism to Wirral and the need to build on the momentum in areas such as New Brighton, the

Cabinet should consider carefully the impact of removing subsidies for tourism events. Some Members also stated that more sophistication could be applied to grant making in terms of 'matched funding' and targeting high return events. Members commented also that Tranmere Rovers FC was a great community resource but, in times of austerity, agreed that the sponsorship should be stopped.

- **Car Parking**

Whilst technically not within the remit of the Committee, the Chair indicated that any proposals in relation to car parking charges could potentially impact upon businesses and shopping centres.

Members noted the consultation response and commented that the data analysis was not sophisticated enough to show the views expressed for standardised parking charges on an area by area basis.

- **Pre-Planning Advice**

Having considered the comments of the Head of Regeneration and Planning in relation to the likely impact of the proposed option, Members indicated their support for this option.

- **Apprenticeship Programme**

The Council had for the past few years funded 167 people to complete Apprenticeships, with a further 114 positions available during the current financial year. There were 2 options available within the consultation paper, the first to remove the budget for the programme, which would end the Wirral Apprentice Programme in its current form; and the second to reduce the budget to the programme and explore opportunities to develop a Liverpool City Region Apprentice scheme.

Members highlighted the value of the Apprenticeship Scheme and commented that with diminishing opportunities for young people, every effort should be made to invest in employment and training. Members also questioned whether an earlier version of the consultation had included an option to retain the current scheme. The Head of Regeneration and Planning proposed to investigate this and to respond to Members direct.

Individual comments were that the present scheme should be retained and, alternatively, that the Council should deliver the best scheme possible and to explore the development of the Liverpool City Region Scheme.

- **Handyperson Scheme**

Members made no comment in relation to the proposal to redevelop the service, for it to be targeted more effectively at people who have recently been discharged from hospital; and reducing the service available to the general public.

- **Restructure of Regeneration, Housing and Planning Department**

The Head of Regeneration and Planning outlined the proposed restructure of the Department, as a result of some significant changes, which had led to a

reconsideration of the work of the Department. Members indicated support for the option, under the circumstances.

- **Home Insulation**

Members noted the support for Option Two: To reduce the budget for the programme, allowing for some energy efficiency and fuel poverty work to continue.

- **Housing Support for BME Communities**

Under the circumstances, Members indicated their support for, or noted the support for the option to remove the service, as other services both from the community and public sectors could potentially fill the gap.

- **Supporting People**

The Chair referred to scrutiny work that had been planned in relation to Supporting People and advised the Committee of the significant work being undertaken at an officer level. A full report would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee and consequently, the planned scrutiny work would not now proceed. Members noted that the option would reduce the Supporting People budget from next year.

- **Investing in Wirral's Businesses (Invest Wirral)**

Members noted that the option involved a reduction in support to businesses through a number of avenues, including business investments, grants and other funds, which may be replaced regionally. The Head of Regeneration and Planning advised that the option would also reduce duplication with other services by removing the Invest Wirral events budget and social enterprise support. In response to comments from Members he indicated that officers were consulting widely to avoid any further duplication.

Resolved – That the Cabinet be requested to have due regard to the views expressed in relation to those budget options within the remit of the Economy and Regeneration O&S Committee.

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**HEALTH AND WELL BEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
12 FEBRUARY 2013**

54 CONSULTATION FINDINGS : WHAT REALLY MATTERS STAGE 2

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The comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement had been undertaken to inform the development of the Council's Corporate and Financial Plan for 2013-2016 and further to inform the decision making process surrounding significant budget savings. The Cabinet had noted the consultation process and implementation described within the report, and thanked Wirral residents, staff and other stakeholders for their input. Cabinet had also noted the detailed consultation findings in relation to each budget option as contained within Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

Kevin McCallum, Corporate Marketing Officer, Chief Executive's Department gave a brief presentation on the consultation findings and provided information in relation to targeted engagement and the methodology for the geographic and demographic analysis that had been undertaken. Key messages were that the Council should protect the vulnerable, retain responsibility for quality and look to raise income and eliminate waste. The Chief Executive had responded personally to all direct communication from members of staff and a team was in place to ensure Equality Impact Assessments, continued engagement and consultation and to show due regard to concerns raised.

Individual views expressed by Members in relation to the general analysis of consultation responses, were that the comments did not represent a neutral interpretation; for example, 51% being shown as either strong support for an option or, conversely, being a slight majority against. However, Members accepted the accuracy of the figures and noted that the comments were subjective.

The Committee was requested to give consideration to the consultation feedback in relation to the following specific items, which fell within its remit and the Chair proposed that views expressed by Members could form the basis of feedback to Budget Cabinet.

In relation to concerns raised regarding the lesser responses to stage two and asked if this was because of the document being lengthy, Mr McCallum indicated that he did not feel this was the case and explained that incomplete online submissions were taken into account as part of the process.

In relation to ethnicity and consultation with those whose first language was not English, Mr McCallum indicated that the Department had worked with

external agencies to liaise with the hard to reach group; produce and circulate information and assist people in completing the questionnaires. No requests were received for translated documents.

In relation to petitions, emails and comments received, information regarding petitions had been fed in to the consultation process and reported to Cabinet. Emails sent to Chief Executive were being monitored and fed into the process; questionnaire responses were appropriately analysed and all comments published to the Council's website.

Mr Donaldson, Co-opted member representing carers asked about the letters sent to Chief Executive from Mencap in relation to the consultation and asked if these letters would be published. Mr McCallum agreed to look into this issue.

In relation to the impacts the options if taken would have on individuals, service areas and wards, Mr McCallum indicated that policy officers were currently working on these details and once this had been done it would enable officers to feedback to Members.

The Chair indicated that in relation to the proposals detailed within the report, not enough details had been given for the Committee to discuss, and Cabinet may make recommendations at their next meeting, so at this stage the Committee were unable to examine anything until the decision of the Cabinet was known.

The Chair indicated that he proposed to hold a special meeting of the Committee be held in March 2013 to discuss the saving options in more detail.

A Member expressed view that all services and workers in particular social workers and day services need to be retained and protected to assist the elderly and vulnerable and also to undertake the statutory duty in relation to assessments.

Mr Donaldson indicated that he had been contacted by a number of carers raising concern regarding the options to close day services and respite facilities, and welcomed the proposed special meeting to discuss the options further.

Members indicated that an understanding was needed of the proposals, details and planning to enable possible alternatives to be sought.

Mr Hodgkinson indicated that quite a lot of information had been circulated to provide a clearer understanding but this was not a business case.

In relation to joint working with the NHS, David Allison, Chief Executive, Wirral University Teaching Hospital indicated that he was in constant dialogue with all partners and at present the hospital was struggling to accommodate patients attending A&E. The hospital was working with social care to tackle

the transition for patients from hospital to social care, however, the NHS were also under pressure to make relative savings.

Ms Wall, co-opted member representing the Older People's Parliament raised concerns regarding the proposals for the specialist transport to services, in relation to the option to remove ineffective transport and asked that if ceased what would be provided for those people who used the transport to access day services etc.

In response to Members questions regarding responsibility for drug, alcohol and domestic violence initiatives and services provision, Mr Hodgkinson indicated that the contract as indicated in the budget options would be dealt with by the Public Health Commission. In relation to patient care Mr Hodgkinson joint working was needed to improve service provision and patient care.

Mr Shanti Saagar, co-opted member representing the BME Community indicated that "bed blocking" had been a big problem historically and suggested that rehabilitation services could be a possible answer. He further indicated that he had recently attended a meeting and received a presentation regarding the 'Torbay experience' and suggested that the Committee could have the same presentation to gauge where we are and where we are going in the future.

Resolved – That

- (1) the presentation be noted;**
- (2) the report be noted and staff be thanked for all their hard work during the consultation process;**
- (3) it be agreed that a Special meeting be held in March 2013, to allow further consideration of the budget savings; and the Committee Administrator be requested to liaise with the Chair, Director of Adult Social Services and Spokespersons to arrange a suitable date;**
- (4) the Committee Administrator be requested to arrange a presentation in relation to the 'Torbay Experience' for a future meeting of the Committee.**

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**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
14 FEBRUARY 2013**

69 CONSULTATION FINDINGS: WHAT REALLY MATTERS STAGE 2

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The comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement had been undertaken to inform the development of the Council's Corporate and Financial Plan for 2013-2016 and further to inform the decision making process surrounding significant budget savings. The Cabinet had noted the consultation process and implementation described within the report, and thanked Wirral residents, staff and other stakeholders for their input. Cabinet had also noted the detailed consultation findings in relation to each budget option as contained within Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

The Council's Senior Policy Manager gave a brief presentation on the consultation findings and provided information in relation to targeted engagement and the methodology for the geographic and demographic analysis that had been undertaken. Key messages were that the Council should protect the vulnerable, retain responsibility for quality and look to raise income and eliminate waste. The Chief Executive had responded personally to all direct communication from members of staff and a team was in place to ensure Equality Impact Assessments, continued engagement and consultation and to show due regard to concerns raised.

Individual views were expressed by Members in relation to the general analysis of consultation responses received. This included queries were raised regarding the 2.7% response rate. Members were assured that this had been the furthest reaching consultation that Wirral Council had ever conducted.

A Member sought details regarding clarification on the costs involved with the consultation and also requested a breakdown of responses for each ward. The Committee were assured that this information would be circulated to each Committee Member following the meeting.

A Member queried equality issues and was referred to section 3.0 of the report whereby it was suggested that Black and Minority Ethnic groups were well represented within the sample.

Officers were thanked and commended by the members of the Committee for all work conducted on the What Really Matters consultation.

The Committee was requested to give consideration to the consultation feedback in relation to the following specific items, which fell within its remit and the Chair proposed that individual views expressed by Members could form the basis of feedback to Budget Cabinet –

1. Libraries

There were a number of options within this area, including further merging of libraries and One Stop Shops, the reduction of opening hours, particularly around Christmas and New Year, and the increased number of volunteers in the running of facilities.

Members expressed their support for the use of volunteers but queried the training facilities available for such staff on computer equipment. The Committee was assured that training would be provided to those concerned

2. Car Parking

The Committee considered the proposal to standardise car parking charges across the borough and reduce the 'all day' charge to a competitive rate of £2.50, and bring in annual and seasonal permit rates in outer Birkenhead car parks

The Committee expressed mixed reviews regarding standardised charging and some concerns were raised over the impact on towns and villages with local businesses. Comments were also raised regarding the accessibility and affordability of public transport in certain areas.

Councillor Norbury suggested that a more scientific study be conducted to involve Merseytravel and to review suitable transport plans for each particular area. The Chair suggested that this be considered at a future meeting

Councillor J Williams called for a Scrutiny Review Party to discuss issues regarding car parking. This was endorsed by the Chair.

3. Garden Waste Collection

Options considered were the introduction of a kerbside collection charge for garden waste, the proposal was that this would be an annual charge of £35.

Rob Beresford, Head of Regulation informed Members that if this option were to be agreed then the Council would contract this service out

The Committee noted that 51% of respondents stated this option to be completely unacceptable. Members took this on board and queried the viability of the proposal in terms of enforceability.

4. Household Waste Collection

Members in general supported the proposal to increase the charge of the 'ERIC' service from £20 to £26.50.

5. Kennels Service

Members expressed their concern over the proposed option to provide a joint kennel service with partners across Merseyside. This would mean residents having to travel to Halewood to collect their dogs. The Committee were largely opposed to this option and comments were raised regarding the importance of protecting vulnerable animals across the Borough.

6. Environmental Health

The Committee noted that Cheshire West and Chester Council were currently intending to proceed with the proposal to form a mutual service.

Members noted the consultation response.

7. Trading Standards

The proposal involved the reduction of service leading to the reduction of staff. Members raised concerns over door to door traders and loan sharks and the impact that a reduction in staff would have on the protection of the public.

Rob Beresford, Head of Regulation informed Members that the Government were conducting an extensive review upon Trading Standards and regional groups had been set up through which all loan sharks information is being channelled.

Members noted the consultation response.

8. Pest Control

Members considered the option to reduce the service, which will lead to a reduction in staff.

Rob Beresford, Head of Regulation responded to questions from Members with regards to redundancies and informed the Committee that it is anticipated that one redundancy would be made. The service currently has seven members of staff. Members noted the consultation response.

9. Highway Maintenance

There were a number of options in this area including the reduction of proactive maintenance of roads, footways, signage and street furniture, and which would mean the Council would focus most resources on maintenance where there was a direct safety issue.

Members highlighted the importance of protecting roads and commented that some of the quality of the work needed addressing. Members noted the consultation response.

10. Street lighting

Members considered that this option would reduce the service and mean focusing the activity on targeted inspections at problem sites.

Members noted the consultation response.

11. Highways Drainage

Members noted that the option would reduce the services and mean focusing the activity on targeted inspections and problem sites.

Members expressed their concerns with the reduction in service as regards to highways which are prone to flooding.

12. Street Cleaning

Rob Beresford, head of Regulation informed members that this option sought to encourage the community to improve levels of street cleanliness and if successful this reduction would be rolled out across other areas.

Members noted the proposal and expressed their support.

13. School Crossing Patrols

This option would involve inviting schools to pay for the crossing patrol service and removing the cost to the Council.

Councillor Mitchell declared a personal interest by virtue of him being a School Governor of two Wirral schools.

Members expressed strong concerns regarding the implementation of this option with particular focus on the protection of children from harm.

14. Removal of the Maintenance of Parks

The Committee noted that nearly 60%, of those who responded to the survey found the option to stop maintenance on a number of parks, green spaces, beaches and grass verges completely unacceptable.

Members commented that this was a highly valued service and expressed the importance of public opinion on this matter. They also acknowledged the value and support of friends of parks across Wirral and noted that not every park in Wirral received this

15. Reduction in the Maintenance of Parks

Members considered this option in line with the above option.

16. Community Patrol and Dog Fouling

Members of the Committee noted that the consultation response was fairly balanced and made no comments in relation to this issue.

17. Modernisation of Leisure

This option involved making a number of changes to pool operating charges to pool opening times, including closing Europa Leisure Pool and Guinea Gap Pool during less busy times, and reducing the staff requirements for the sauna operation at Guinea Gap Leisure Centre among others.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and comments were made regarding the importance of swimming for residents in the Borough. It was also stated that there was a high sickness rate amongst leisure centre workers and suggested that this issue needs to be looked into in more depth.