



## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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| <b>Date:</b>  | <b>Monday, 3 December 2012</b>               |
| <b>Time:</b>  | <b>6.00 pm</b>                               |
| <b>Venue:</b> | <b>Committee Room 3 - Wallasey Town Hall</b> |

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### AGENDA

**1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP**

Members of the Committee are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non pecuniary interests, in connection with any item(s) on the agenda and state the nature of the interest.

Members are reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they are subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

**2. BUDGET OPTIONS (Pages 1 - 88)**

The following documents are attached for Members' consideration:

- **'What Really Matters' Questionnaire**
- **Summary paper for Families and Wellbeing**
- Options papers relevant to this Committee:
  - Transport Policies for Adults and Children
  - Area Teams for Family Support
  - Schools Music Service
  - Oaklands Centre
  - Educational Psychology Service
  - Foundation Learning

- Universal and Targeted Commissioning - Parenting
- PPM and PFI Options
- School Improvement and Income from Academy Schools
- Youth and Play Services
- Youth Challenge
- Children's Centres and Sure Start
- Careers, Education Information, Advice and Guidance
- Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

**3. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR**



**PLEASE RETURN BY  
31st January 2013**

## **Budget Options from the Chief Executive**

“I offer these options for consideration by Councillors, residents and staff according to the overriding principle that we should spend less on ourselves – taking savings first from our ‘back office’ and so reducing as much as possible the impact on services to residents, particularly our poorest and most vulnerable.”

*Graham Burgess, Chief Executive of Wirral Council*

**You can complete this questionnaire online at [www.wirral.gov.uk/whatreallymatters](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/whatreallymatters), or hand it in at any Council One Stop Shop, Library, Children's Centre or Leisure Centre. You can also post it back to: What Really Matters, Wallasey Town Hall, Brighton Street, CH44 8ED**

## **Dear Resident**

I was appointed as Chief Executive to improve the way in which Wirral Council operates. My first task is to ensure we address the unprecedented budget challenge before us. Unprecedented cuts to Council funding from central Government, combined with unfunded increased demand for social care in particular, mean that we have no choice but to cut around a third of our net budget over the next three years.

These are tough times – for our staff, Councillors, and most importantly the people who we serve. We have some tough decisions to make over the coming months.

Today I publish my options for where savings might be found for Councillors, Partners, staff and the public to consider. I have sought to offer these options according to the overriding principle that we should spend less on ourselves, taking savings first from our ‘back office’ and so mitigating as much as possible the impact on services to residents particularly our poorest and most vulnerable.

You will see from the chart on the next page, we have been largely successful in developing these options to reduce the impact on residents as much as is possible. I guarantee that will always be our overriding principle as we strive to make the savings we are being forced to make.

These options also represent around 25% more than we need to save in this first year. That is to make sure that our Councillors, when they consider these options alongside your feedback, have the opportunity to make choices as they take these extremely difficult decisions. These savings are proposed as part of a three year drive, which will see the Council building firm foundations for the future of the borough by transforming the way we work and provide services.

I am therefore firstly proposing to reduce our Senior Management costs by around a third. I am also consulting on reducing other staffing costs such as car mileage and phone bills.

In addition I am bringing forward options to make better use of our buildings and Information Technology. Importantly I am reviewing the amount of money spent on Agency Staff, Consultants, marketing and all other non essential spending.

Given the size of the budget gap this will not however be enough. The further options I put before you are not easy ones. Council services must change – there is no other way of finding the massive amount of money we need.

My pledge is that I will consult with staff, residents, community, voluntary and faith groups and businesses in order that we make the tough decisions we need to - taking your views and opinions into account.

**Graham Burgess,**  
Chief Executive.

# Your details

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Please provide your e-mail address if you would like Wirral Council to send you updates about Council services and future consultations. Your information will be managed in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy and will never be passed on to any unauthorised third party.

Your email address: \_\_\_\_\_

If you don't have an email address please provide your postal address:

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your relationship to Wirral Council?** *(please tick all that apply)*

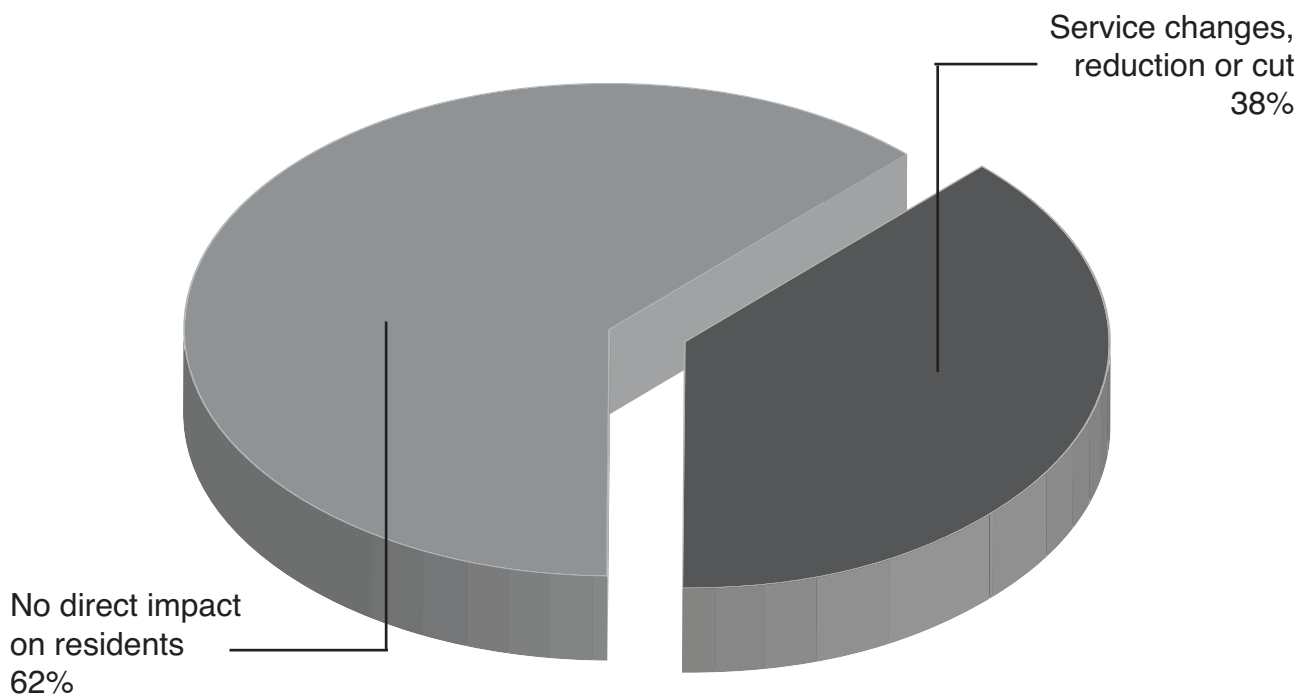
- Resident                       Member of staff                       Local business  
 Partner agency/organisation                       Voluntary/community organisation

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation please tell us its' name:

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# Where the savings come from

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**You will see that this questionnaire is split into four sections:**

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Section A: **Transformation and Resources**

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Section B: **Regeneration and Environment**

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Section C: **Families and Wellbeing**

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Section D: **About You**

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There are quite a lot of options, and questions, within this document. All questions have choices to best describe your view. Please tick one box for each option.

Please feel free to complete either as much or as little as you would like – every response, no matter how small, will be counted.

These budget options have been developed by Council Officers and, as much as possible; we have tried to develop them to follow what you told us in the first stage of this consultation.

For each of the options summarised in this report, you can find much more detailed information as to what likely impact they will bring by visiting our website at [www.wirral.gov.uk/whatreallymatters](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/whatreallymatters), calling into any One Stop Shop or Library, or calling us on 0151 606 2030.

# Section A: Transformation and Resources

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## REDUCING COUNCIL MANAGEMENT

Wirral Council has around 4800 employees. Some of the structures in departments, and services, are no longer fit for purpose and could be updated and reduced, to achieve major savings. This option involves a total restructure and significant reduction in middle and senior management layers across the entire Council.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## WORKFORCE CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

The Council's current salary costs are £102 million. Another £6 million is spent on salary enhancements based on national and local conditions of service. This option is designed to reduce this expenditure by £4 million through making changes to employees' terms and conditions, including car mileage, phones, unpaid leave and single time working.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## PROCUREMENT

The Council is looking to make savings and increase income through the way it pays for goods and services, through starting to charge schools for work it does and also through paying some invoices and bills through an online system.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

## TREASURY MANAGEMENT

The way the Council manages its cash flow and borrowing could also be significantly improved to bring in major savings. The Council will fund road repairs, building investments and other works through internal funds rather than borrowing, which will save around £1.7m.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## CIVIC SERVICES (THE MAYOR OF WIRRAL)

The Mayor undertakes a range of civic and fundraising duties throughout their term of office. The option here is to make a saving through re-designing the service to offer better value for money.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## ELECTIONS

The Council currently operates a system of three elections every four years, with Councillors elected for a four-year term. The option here would be to hold 'all-out' elections every four years, where all Members would be up for election for a four-year term.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

### **REDUCING THE COST OF DEMOCRACY**

The Council currently operates a model of governance known as Strong Leader, which involves a Cabinet and five Overview and Scrutiny Committees, plus a number of other committees, who work to set Council policy, make and scrutinise decisions and set the Council budget. This option would involve a review of the Council's constitution and number of committees, and related meetings, to bring savings and a reduction in staff.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICE**

The Council invests funds in its computer equipment, which is used by thousands of Council employees on a daily basis. This option involves centralising, and significantly reducing, the funding spent on providing computers, printers and other IT equipment to Council, including reducing the number of employees required to service the equipment.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING**

The Council's communications and engagement division is responsible for promoting Wirral as a place, the Council's services, consultation activity and public relations and media activity. There are 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 is used to subsidise tourism and visitor events throughout the borough.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **AREA FORUM FUNDING**

The Council invests funding each year into its programme of Area Forum events. This funding is available for communities to pay for additional Council services or to pay for community or voluntary groups to perform projects and activities. The option here is to cancel the currently frozen allocation of Forum funding, and to further remove the funding from the Council budget in future years, to be replaced by a new method of engaging and working with communities.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **BETTER USE OF BUILDINGS**

The Council owns an extensive and varied number of buildings, from which it delivers services and provides back office support. This option involves closing the Acre Lane and Municipal Buildings and relocating staff elsewhere.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable



### **TRANSFORMING BUSINESS SUPPORT**

The Council has a range of administration staff throughout the Council, who provide support to departments. The option here is to bring together administration into three business units to support each new Council area, to ensure reduced costs and higher efficiency.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **RESTRUCTURE OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT DIVISION**

This Council department is responsible for a number of functions, covering Council buildings, human resources and legal services. This option proposes restructuring and reducing the division as well as investigating the outsourcing of part of the department.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

Is there anything you would like to say about the savings options being proposed under Transformation and Resources?

# Section B: Regeneration and Environment

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## PARKING

Car Park charges vary extensively across Wirral. It is much more expensive, for example, to park in Birkenhead than in West Kirby. The proposal here is 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. This would also involve reducing staffing across the service.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION

Garden waste is at the moment collected free of charge from Wirral residents. The option here is to stop the free kerbside collection of waste and begin charging for the service. On average, Councils who charge for this service charge in the region of £35 per year.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## HOUSEHOLD WASTE COLLECTION

The 'ERIC' service is available for people to have items of large household waste collected and disposed of. The current charge for this service is £20 per collection; this option would involve raising this charge to £26.50 per collection.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

## PRE-PLANNING ADVICE

The Council currently provides pre-planning application advice free of charge, many other Local Authorities across Merseyside charge. The option here is to introduce a fee for all pre-planning advice.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## APPRENTICE PROGRAMME

The Council has for the past few years funded 167 people to complete Apprenticeships, with a further 114 positions available during the current financial year. There are 2 options available here, the first is to remove the budget for this programme, which would end the Wirral Apprentice Programme in its current form; and the second is to reduce the budget to this programme, and explore opportunities to develop a Liverpool City Region Apprentice scheme. Please tell us which your preferred option is:

- Remove the budget for this programme
  - Reduce the budget for the programme and develop a Liverpool City Region scheme
- 

## HANDYPERSON SCHEME

The Council runs a handyman scheme, which is open to all residents and means people can request maintenance on their homes for a relatively cheap price. The option here is to redevelop this service, meaning it is targeted more effectively at people who have recently been discharged from hospital, and reducing the service available to the general public.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

## **RESTRUCTURE OF THE REGENERATION, HOUSING AND PLANNING DIVISION**

This option involves a service restructure in the Regeneration, Housing and Planning division, as a result of some significant changes which have led to a reconsideration of the work of the department.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
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## **KENNELS SERVICE**

The Council operates a kennels service, which serves to re-home abandoned and stray dogs. This option would involve closing the specific Wirral service and instead providing a joint service with partners across Merseyside. This would mean residents would have to travel to Halewood to collect their dogs.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## **HOME INSULATION**

The Warmer Wirral programme provides free or reduced cost home insulation for Wirral residents.

- Remove the budget for the programme
  - Reduce the budget for the programme, allowing for some energy efficiency and fuel poverty work to continue
- 

## **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

The Environmental Health team perform a wide range of duties related to the health, wellbeing and safety of the borough. This option involves developing a partnership with Cheshire West

and Chester to put a mutual organisation together to deliver the service.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## **TRADING STANDARDS**

Within the Trading Standards team there are a number of officers who are responsible for providing support to vulnerable customers. This budget option involves reducing this service by a number of officers.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## **PEST CONTROL**

The Pest Control service provides a treatment service to residents and companies. The option in this area involves reducing the department by one member of staff.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## **HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE**

The Council has a contract in place to cover all highway maintenance, which is soon going to be re-tendered. This option would reduce the proactive maintenance of roads, footways, signage and street furniture, and mean the Council would focus most resources on maintenance where there is a direct safety issue.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

### **STREET LIGHTING**

The Council operates a scheme whereby people perform lighting inspections at night. This option would involve stopping these night-time inspections and also, where it is safe to do so, switching off lighting either completely or for part of the night.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **HIGHWAYS DRAINAGE**

The Council performs regular maintenance work across drainage inspections on the highways, ensuring that risk of flooding is brought as low as possible. This option would reduce the service, and mean focusing the activity on targeted inspections at problem sites.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **STREET CLEANSING**

The Council, through its contractor, invests a significant amount of resources in collecting litter and cleaning the streets. This option would involve reducing that investment, and working with the community to improve levels of street cleanliness. If successful, this reduction would be rolled out across other areas.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **SCHOOL CROSSING PATROLS**

The Council provides school crossing patrol sites across the borough. This option would involve inviting schools to pay for the crossing

patrol service and removing the cost to the Council. If schools are not prepared to pay for the service then it may be removed.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **REMOVAL OF THE MAINTENANCE OF PARKS**

Wirral has over 200 sites which are classified as being 'parks and open spaces', which are a mixture of large and local parks, general green spaces, beaches and bowling greens. This option would involve stopping maintenance on a number of parks, green spaces, beaches and grass verges and working with community organisations and 'friends of parks' groups to ensure the service was maintained.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **REDUCTION IN THE MAINTENANCE OF PARKS**

This further option relating to parks involves the reduction of maintenance whereby some areas will be cut every three weeks, rather than two, a reduction in bedding displays and the pre-planned maintenance programme. Rural grass verges would also be left for wildlife and only cut where there is a road safety issue. The Council would work with community organisations and 'friends of parks' groups to ensure the service was maintained.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
-

## **HOUSING SUPPORT FOR BME COMMUNITIES**

Part of the Council's supporting people team is a small service which helps to provide support for people from black and minority ethnic communities to live independently. The option here is to remove this service, as other services both from the community and public sectors, including the Citizen's Advice Bureau, could potentially fill the gap.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## **SUPPORTING PEOPLE**

The supporting people programme delivers services to around 5,500 Wirral residents; making sure that those people with housing related needs are supported. This option would involve reducing this budget through renegotiating contracts, tendering services, remodelling services and closing services.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## **INVESTING IN WIRRAL'S BUSINESSES**

Wirral Council runs a service called Invest Wirral, which is designed to provide a wide range of business support services. The option here would be the reduction in support to businesses through a number of avenues, including business investments, grants and other funds. These funds may be replaced regionally. This option would also reduce duplication with other services by removing the Invest Wirral events budget and social enterprise support.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## **COMMUNITY PATROL AND DOG FOULING**

Wirral Community Patrol consists of more than 20 officers who work towards improving the security and safety of Wirral Council properties but also making Wirral a safe place to live, work and visit. The Council also provide a Dog Fouling Enforcement Team which aim to improve and protect the Wirral environment by reducing dog fouling. The option is to stop paying enhanced salaries for evening and weekend work for Community Patrol, except for bank holidays, and also to reduce the size of the dog fouling enforcement team.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## **MODERNISATION OF LEISURE**

Currently, Leisure Centres across Wirral have periods where usage is extremely low, compared to the number of staff working at the sites. The option in this area is to make a number of changes to pool operating times and working practices, 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.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

Is there anything you would like to say about the savings options being proposed under Regeneration and Environment?

# Section C: Families and Wellbeing

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## COMMUNITY MEALS

The Council provide an outdated, but appreciated, meals-on-wheels service. This service charges people £2.68 per meal. The proposal here is to increase this charge by 79p per meal to a total charge of £3.47 per meal – which is what the service costs the Council.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

The Council provides a range of technology which is installed in people's homes to enable them to be more independent, such as bed occupancy sensors, property exit sensors, pull chords, flood detectors and falls detectors. These devices are installed and monitored 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, free of charge. The proposal here is to implement a weekly fee for this service of £3. This charge would only be applied to those people who could afford it.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## CHARGING FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Wirral Council's charges for adult social care services are among the lowest in the region. Many Councils charge 100% of a person's disposable income, Wirral currently charges 75%. The proposal here is to bring our charges in line with other North West Councils and charge 100% of a person's total disposable income.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## TARGETED SUPPORT THROUGH NHS CONTRACTS

The Council works closely with the NHS to provide a whole range of services for vulnerable adults; including nursing care, residential care and reablement (where a person is supported back to full health following an illness) among others. In this area the Council will work with colleagues in the NHS to reduce the use of higher cost services such as nursing and residential care to focus on community based alternatives such as Assistive Technology, intermediate care and reablement.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## EXTRA CARE HOUSING

The Council provides over 200 extra care housing units across the borough, which is a form of sheltered housing and residential care. The option here is to re-tender those contracts and look to provide the same level of service at a lower cost.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable



## RESIDENTIAL AND RESPITE CARE

The Council owns 3 residential care homes which provide short breaks for people with learning disabilities and mental health difficulties. The option here is to reduce the number of facilities from 3 to 1, while still providing the same service. More people will then benefit from supported living arrangements rather than residential care.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## DAY CARE AND DAY SERVICES TRANSFORMATION

The Council owns a number of Day Centres which support people with Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities and Mental Health difficulties. All of these centres need, to different extents, substantial investment and, due to younger people choosing to use other services, demand is substantially reducing. This option would involve investment in some centres, and the closure of others, while at the same time transforming the service to ensure it offers a modern and quality service.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR CARERS

When a carer is assessed for support, a “carer’s budget” is identified and allocated to the person. This option would involve changing this system and replacing it with an annual grant, which would be based on a banding system currently

used by other Councils. This would be based on the carer’s role and requirement for support, and would mean some carers receiving less financial support, but some receiving more according to their need.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## TRANSPORT POLICIES

The Council provides transport for over one thousand people across the borough every day to travel to Council facilities and schools among other places. This option would involve a full review of that transport, with a view to stopping providing transport to some or all Council facilities and schools. This would require people using the transport to either contribute towards the cost of the service or find other ways to travel to the service.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## AREA TEAMS FOR FAMILY SUPPORT

Area Teams provide preventative services for vulnerable children and families. This option would involve reducing the number of teams from 11, to 4, and require the teams to re-focus their work based on need.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

### **SCHOOLS MUSIC SERVICE**

The music service has for many years received a subsidy from the Council. This option removes that subsidy and requires the service to bring in enough income to break even.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **OAKLANDS OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE**

This service provides outdoor recreation and education activities, primarily for schools. The service also receives a subsidy from the Council, and this option would involve removing that funding and requiring the service to break even.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **EDUCATION PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE**

The Council provides an educational psychology service, which helps all children with special educational needs. The proposal in this area is to reduce this service and have a more targeted approach, whilst continuing to meet statutory requirements.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **FOUNDATION LEARNING**

This is a programme offered to schools to support vocational learning for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

The proposal in this area is to remove this funding and instead provide support through the careers education information, advice and guidance service.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **COMMISSIONING OF PARENTING SERVICES**

The Council invests money with organisations in the community and voluntary sector to provide parenting and family support, and the proposal in this area is to target a reduced service at those families most at risk of poor outcomes.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **SCHOOLS BUDGET**

The Council has a budget for schools maintenance and also contributes towards a 27-year Private Finance Initiative agreement. The proposal in this area is to transfer the costs currently met by the Council to the schools budget.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND INCOME FROM SCHOOLS**

The Council provides a number of services to schools, some of which are provided free of charge as part of the Council's legal obligations, some which are charged back to schools and some which are provided for no cost, or a cost which is lower than it costs to deliver. The option in this area is to reduce the level of free services the Council provides for schools and increasing the income from those services provided to Academy schools.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## **REVIEW OF VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH SECTOR GRANTS**

The voluntary, community and faith sector provide a number of services such as luncheon clubs, advocacy support and day care with funding provided by the Council. The proposal is that the Council reviews these services as part of a wider Council approach to ensure more targeted and cost effective services, based on early intervention and prevention.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## **ASSESSMENT AND CARE MANAGEMENT**

The Council is reviewing its assessment and care management process working closely with the NHS to improve the experience of care service users and make quicker the process from referral to support plan. The proposal is that through making the process more efficient, it would be possible to respond to financial pressures by reducing the number of social

workers and assessment support workers, although it is accepted that this would potentially negate improvements made through redesign.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## **REVIEW OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES**

Many Councils have changed their services for learning disabilities, and developed supported living opportunities as an alternative to residential care. The option in this area is to develop supported housing arrangements for people with learning disabilities as an alternative to residential care.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

## **REVIEW OF EQUIPMENT AND EMERGENCY DUTY**

The Council provides equipment for people such as wheelchairs and also provides an emergency out of hours care management system. The proposal here is to review both services and investigate a shared service with the NHS to save money.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

### **YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICES**

The Council provides and maintains 6 play schemes and 14 youth facilities, as well as extensive outreach projects. The option here is to review the number of play schemes, reduce the outreach service and integrate all youth clubs into the main four youth 'hubs'.

This would involve centralising all of the youth services within the main four hubs, and investing in a new Youth Zone for Central Birkenhead.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **YOUTH CHALLENGE**

The Council also funds services around risk taking behaviour (alcohol and drugs) as well as positive activities such as drama and arts. The option here is to reduce the budget of those services and ensure that the budget is used to target the most vulnerable.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **CHILDREN'S CENTRES AND SURE START**

The Council has 16 Children's Centres, as well as a number of satellite children's centres. The option here is to reduce universal services from children's centres, to transfer provision of day-care to Private, Voluntary or Independent providers and to charge for most universal services which are provided. This would also include the release of a number of satellite children's centres, and a reduction in the Sure Start budget.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **HELP AND ADVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

The Council provides an optional service for people who are over 65, which provides support and advice about benefits and how to access other voluntary and Council services. The option in this area is to remove this service, and instead use existing contracts with a number of voluntary and community organisations to provide it on our behalf.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **CAREERS, EDUCATION INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE**

Through a contract, the Council provides a wide range of careers advice to young people. The option in this area is to reduce this service so it is targeted at those most in need.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

### **SHORT BREAKS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

The Council provides funding for children with disabilities to go on short breaks, which provide respite for them and their families. The option here is to reduce the number and range of the short breaks which are provided, while still providing the service.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE**

This is a service which provides support for children with mental health needs. The option here is to reduce this service by one third, and target resources at those most in need.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **REVENUES AND BENEFITS**

As Welfare Reform and Universal Credit is rolled out the workload in the Revenues and Benefits division will increase. Staffing levels will, however, be able to reduce to reflect the new arrangements. The option in this area is therefore to begin to reduce staff in this division as the new Universal Credit is implemented.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

### **INCREASING COURT COSTS**

The Council at the moment charges non-payers of Council Tax £65. This is below the actual costs, which are around £87. The option here is to increase these charges to £75.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS**

There are a range of discounts and exemptions on Council Tax available to Wirral residents, including reductions for properties undergoing major repair and long term empty properties. The option in this area is to conduct a full review of these discounts with a view to increasing income from Council Tax.

- I support this under the circumstances
  - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
  - I find this completely unacceptable
- 

### **COUNCIL TAX PENSIONER DISCOUNT**

Pensioners aged over 70 in Wirral currently receive a discount of 7.76% against their Council Tax. The option here is to reduce that discount or change the qualifying criteria.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

### **COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY RELIEF**

Wirral last year paid discretionary business rate relief for charities, voluntary, social, educational and sporting organisations for a total of over £1m. The option here is to review and potentially reduce the amount of businesses and funding which is used to help these businesses with their rates.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

### **LIBRARIES AND ONE STOP SHOPS**

Wirral Council has a network of 13 One Stop Shops and 24 Libraries. The options in this area include: further merging of libraries and One Stop Shops, the reduction of opening hours, particularly around Christmas and New Year, and the increased use of volunteers in the running of the facilities. The option of community asset transfer will also be part of this option. The Council also propose to reduce the book fund, which libraries use to purchase new books.

- I support this under the circumstances
- I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
- I find this completely unacceptable

Is there anything you would like to say about the savings options being proposed under Families and Wellbeing?

# Section D: About you

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**This section is all about you. It would be helpful when we analyse the results of this questionnaire for us to know a little bit about you.**

The next few questions are optional – you don't have to complete them if you don't want to. None of the information you give us will be used for any other purpose than reviewing the results of the questionnaire, and will never be passed on to any third party.

## Your gender:

- Male                       Female                       Prefer not to say

## Your ethnicity:

Please tick a box or state your ethnicity:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> English                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other British              | <input type="checkbox"/> Any other white background       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White & Black Caribbean    | <input type="checkbox"/> White & Black African            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White & Asian              | <input type="checkbox"/> Any other mixed background       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indian                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi                | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any other Asian background | <input type="checkbox"/> African                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Any other Black background       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arab                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Gypsy, Romany or Irish Traveller |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say          |   |

## Your religion or belief:

What is your religion?

- |  |                                    |                                   |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> None              | <input type="checkbox"/> Christian | <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist | <input type="checkbox"/> Hindu     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish            | <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sikh     | <input type="checkbox"/> Any other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |                                    |                                   |                                    |

Or, what is your belief?

- |   |  |                                   |                                |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humanist         | <input type="checkbox"/> Atheist           | <input type="checkbox"/> Agnostic | <input type="checkbox"/> Pagan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any other belief | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |                                   |                                |

**Your disability:**

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

- Yes  No  Prefer not to say

Please tick all the boxes which apply:

- Physical Disability  Mental Health  Sensory impairment  
 Learning Difficulty  Prefer not to say

**Your age:**

- Under 16  16-24  25-44  45-64  
 65+  Prefer not to say

***If you are under 16, please do not answer the remaining questions.***

**Marriage or Civil Partnership:**

Are you currently:

- Married  Single  Divorced  Widowed  
 In a Civil Partnership  None of the above  Prefer not to say

**Your sexual orientation:**

Please tick one box -

- Heterosexual  Lesbian or gay  Bisexual  Asexual  
 Prefer not to say

**Gender Reassignment:**

Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

- Yes  No  Prefer not to say

**Thank you for your time and involvement - it will make a difference.**



**[www.wirral.gov.uk/whatreallymatters](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/whatreallymatters)  
[engage@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:engage@wirral.gov.uk)  
0151 606 2030**

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Families and Wellbeing  
**Budget Options**  
from the Chief Executive

# The Budget Challenge in Wirral

## Dear Resident

I was appointed as Chief Executive to improve the way in which Wirral Council operates. My first task is to ensure we address the unprecedented budget challenge before us. Unprecedented cuts to Council funding from central Government, combined with unfunded increased demand for social care in particular, mean that we have no choice but to cut around a third of our net budget over the next three years.

These are tough times – for our staff, Councillors, and most importantly the people who we serve. We have some tough decisions to make over the coming months.

Today I publish my options for where savings might be found for Councillors, Partners, staff and the public to consider. I have sought to offer these options according to the overriding principle that we should spend less on ourselves, taking savings first from our ‘back office’ and so mitigating as much as possible the impact on services to residents particularly our poorest and most vulnerable.

These options also represent around 25% more than we need to save in this first year. That is to make sure that our Councillors, when they consider these options alongside your feedback, have the opportunity to make choices as they take these extremely difficult decisions. These savings are proposed as part of a three year drive, which will see the Council building firm foundations for the future of the borough by transforming the way we work and provide services.

I am therefore firstly proposing to reduce our Senior Management costs by around a third. I am also consulting on reducing other staffing costs such as car mileage and phone bills.

In addition I am bringing forward options to make better use of our buildings and Information Technology. Importantly I am reviewing the amount of money spent on Agency Staff, Consultants, marketing and all other non essential spending.

Given the size of the budget gap this will not however be enough. The further options I put before you are not easy ones. Council services must change – there is no other way of finding the massive amount of money we need.

My pledge is that I will consult with staff, residents, community, voluntary and faith groups and businesses in order that we make the tough decisions we need to - taking your views and opinions into account.

**Graham Burgess,**  
Chief Executive.

# Family and Wellbeing Services in Wirral

**Perhaps the biggest responsibility any Council holds is the duty to protect its most vulnerable residents; adults, children and families.**

## A vision for Children's Services

The local authority's role in acting as a champion for children, supporting schools, shaping and commissioning services, assessing needs and delivering services to children is changing significantly. In the current climate of unprecedented financial austerity, it is imperative that the Council is clear about which services are essential and which are desirable. This is in order to determine which services and facilities can best be delivered by third parties, so that the local authority only delivers directly where it can evidence this represents value for money. Also, that the Council determines which services need public funding and which can be secured through other means.

This strategy emphasises the importance of developing coherent preventative services with partner agencies, which build on universal provision, so that we target interventions with children and families in order to improve outcomes and reduce the number of children requiring expensive and frequently reactive specialist services. Our role in the direct provision of universal services for children should be significantly diminished, or provided on a full cost recovery basis, since other agencies and communities

may be better placed to provide these services, and we must target our resources to work with more vulnerable children and families. However, our role in championing the needs of children, making sure that robust safeguarding processes are in place from top to bottom and across the breadth of the partnership, and making sure that the full range of services are available to meet children's universal needs in partnership with schools and others in their local communities, is as strong as ever.

Moving forward, we must increasingly "think family" to maximise opportunity for shared working across the Families and Wellbeing Directorate. For example, in providing transition support for children with a disability, working with troubled families, placing emphasis on the child and families journey, and through developing teams around families. We also need to configure services in a way which simplifies access, reduces unnecessary bureaucratic processes, and the associated management and back office costs.

There are opportunities through the reconfiguration of services to:

- Deliver well targeted early intervention and prevention; producing better outcomes for children and families and reduced costs in the longer term
- Focus on the child and families journey, not professional processes
- Determine which services and facilities need public funding and which can be secured through other means, so that public funding is targeted at the right people and the right organisations

# Family and Wellbeing Services in Wirral

- Reduce bureaucracy and complexity with single access routes
- Make sure that the Council policies are fit for the current climate
- Maximise partnership opportunities – shared priorities, funding and service delivery.

## **A vision for Adult Social Care**

The changing population, with rapidly increasing numbers of older and vulnerable people, together with changing aspirations and an environment of significantly reducing resources for Local Authorities, brings huge challenge for social care.

In order to meet these challenges we must transform the service offer; we must commission our services based on sound evidence, so that we know we are providing the best and most appropriate levels of care and support that is possible. This will help us to deliver more personalised services, and make sure that people can control their own circumstances, meet their own needs and stay independent for as long as they can.

Our commissioning approach is therefore the critical component of the Council's determination to deliver services in the most effective and efficient way. Adult Social Care is changing in order to focus increasingly on supporting people effectively. The changes are based on 6 key design principles.

Our aim is to ensure that for the people of Wirral:

- We will shift from focussing on crisis management in health and social care towards prevention and early intervention services that promote health, wellbeing and a good quality of life.
- We will work better across the Council and partners to offer information and advice that makes the support offer clearer and signposts people more effectively to a range of organisations including the voluntary, community and faith sector.
- Commissioning will deliver a broader range of integrated service solutions for people based on co-production and recognition of changing aspirations; this will lead to de-commissioning some traditional services as well as commissioning new ones.
- Commissioning will drive efficiency and ensure that we deliver Best Value for the people of Wirral.
- Safeguarding the dignity of vulnerable people and service quality will be at the core of our approach to commissioning.
- We will focus on delivering services locally and will build upon individual and community assets rather than deficits.

# Budget Options

The budget options in this report have been designed to try and improve the value for money which we are getting for our residents, but still making sure that the people who are receiving the service have the choice and opportunities to stay independent and safe.

These budget options have been developed by Council Officers and, as much as possible; we have tried to develop them to follow what you told us in the first stage of this consultation.

That consultation focussed on four main themes: raising income, changing service delivery, re-shaping services and stopping services. The options in this report also follow those four main themes.

For each of the options summarised in this report, you can find much more detailed information as to what likely impact they will bring by visiting our website at [www.wirral.gov.uk/whatreallymatters](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/whatreallymatters) or calling us on 0151 606 2030.

## What You Told Us:

***“The Council should look to raise income through raising or introducing charges. Raising charges should take every step to not disadvantage or marginalise vulnerable groups by making services unaffordable, and the services selected for increased charges should be chosen carefully.”***



# Budget Options

## Option: Community Meals

Community Meals, or 'meals on wheels', have been a traditional part of adult social services for many years. It involves hot meals being delivered to a number of vulnerable residents every day. The service is appreciated by many, but there are some problems associated with it.

There is no choice involved in the Council service – people simply get what they are given, and it doesn't tend to cater for any special dietary requirements such as vegetarianism, or any religious considerations. There are now lots of alternative providers of ready meals that can offer much greater choice to people at a reasonable cost to the individual.

***The proposal is that the Council could increase the charges, to bring Wirral in line with other Councils, so the price paid covers the current cost, which would work out at 79p per meal, and replace the current contract with a smaller contract reflecting anticipated demands for the service.***

At the moment, people receiving community meals pay £2.68 per meal. The cost to the Council is £3.47 per meal.

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**Budget Saving: £75k increased income based on full cost recovery plus £125,000 reduction in spend**

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## Option: Assistive Technology

Around 4500 people in Wirral benefit from some type of assistive technology installed in their home; this includes things like bed occupancy sensors, property exit sensor, pull chords, flood detectors and fall detectors.

This equipment is currently installed free of charge, and the people who receive the service have the added benefit of 24/7 monitoring, again for no charge. People who receive these services normally receive additional benefits to cover additional costs. The value of the equipment ranges significantly, depending on the volume and type of support required but can cost up to £5,000.

***The option in this area is to provide the same service, to the same standard, but introduce a weekly charge of £3 per household, per week, regardless of the level of equipment installed within the house.***

The charge be assessed on an person's ability to pay.

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**Budget Saving:  
£300,000 increased income**

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**Option:**  
**Charges for Non-Residential Services**

The Council has the ability to charge people for the social care services they receive. These charges are for services which include home care, supported living, day care and transport.

*Most Councils charge for these services, and many Councils charge 100% of a person's disposable income. Wirral currently charges 75% of a person's disposable income and the option in this area is to increase this level to 100% from next year. This would also involve a reduction in the savings capital limit for non-residential care to the same level as those receiving residential care.*

This option will increase the contributions made for their care by vulnerable and elderly people. However, the charges are based entirely on a person's ability to pay, and will bring our levels of charges in line with other Councils in the North West.

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**Budget saving:**  
**£880k increased income**

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## What You Told Us:

***“The Council should make savings through changing the way services are delivered through outsourcing, sharing services or encouraging groups of staff to take over the running of services – as long as the Council kept the responsibility for the quality of the service.”***

## Option: Review of contracts

This involves the review of contractual arrangements in three service areas:

### **Extra Care Housing**

The Council has worked with partners to provide over 200 units of extra care housing for older people across 5 locations in the borough. Extra Care Housing is a form of residential care or sheltered housing, whereby the resident lives with a high degree of independence but also receives constant support and protection.

*This option involves the Council re-tendering the contracts for these services to seek to provide a service at the same quality but with better value for money, with consideration of the projected huge increase in our elderly population in the coming years.*

### **Residential and Respite Care**

The Council is committed to working with people who use services, their families and carers, partners and providers to develop services and to encourage the market to deliver flexible and personalised respite and short term breaks. The introduction of block contract arrangements for a small number of short term care beds to facilitate assessments post hospital discharge has the potential to generate savings for the Council.

*The option involves the introduction of contract arrangements for a small number of short term care beds to help with providing assessments after a person has been discharged from hospital.*

### **Day Care**

The Council is committed to working with people who use services, their families and carers, partners and providers to develop services. The Council is developing a contracting framework for day care provided by independent sector providers. This may deliver efficiencies through improved commissioning and the opportunity to standardise daily rates.

*The option further proposes that the Council reviews its approach to commissioning day care provided by the independent sector to deliver efficiencies.*

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**Budget saving:**  
**£600,000**

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## Option: Targeted Support

Wirral Council works closely with the NHS to provide a whole range of services for vulnerable adults. These include nursing care, residential care, and reablement among others. Reablement is where a person is supported back to full health following an illness or injury.

*The option in this area is to work with the NHS and reduce the use of higher cost services such as nursing and residential care homes and to jointly change services to work much more closely together in an integrated way. The main focus is on community based alternatives including Intermediate Care, reablement and assistive technology. The option also includes ensuring that multi disciplinary assessments are comprehensive and ensure individuals are provided with appropriate support.*

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**Budget saving: £3.95m savings and increased income**

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## Option: Residential and Respite Care

The Council currently owns 3 residential care homes providing respite and short breaks for people with learning disabilities and mental health difficulties. The service also provides four crisis beds for people with mental health issues. The in-house provision is expensive and the standard of the buildings is not as high as the Council would want for those it cares for.

*The option in this area would be to merge and improve the residential and respite care directly provided for people with Learning Disabilities by the Council to one location, while closing one of the homes. In relation to Mental Health Services, we will close one building and offer people alternative options in the independent sector. People will benefit from supported living arrangements rather than residential care.*

While this proposal may result in people who are currently living across two locations needing to move, due to potential closure the impact on the people and their carers can be minimised by making sure that alternative, responsive services are available from other providers. This option will result in people who need these services being given a greater choice than they currently receive with existing Council run facilities.

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**Budget saving: £320,000**

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**Option:  
Day Care and Day Services  
Transformation**

Currently, Wirral Council provides a number of Day Centres which support people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health difficulties. The Council is exploring ways to deliver an improved, effective, efficient in-house service that can remain competitive, in terms of quality and cost. All of our day centres at the moment need substantial investment to varying degrees to bring them up to an acceptable quality standard.

***This option will involve the complete transformation of day services; which may result in investing in some centres to make them modern, fit for purpose and suitable to provide the best possible support, but would also mean the Council providing fewer centres.***

Whilst this proposal may result in the closure of some centres, individuals will still be able to access day services if they choose to do so whilst others, through a personal budget, may choose other ways to receive support. The demand for day services in the voluntary sector may increase as people exercise greater choice through personal budgets. The project to transform day services is developing a service model based on the needs and priorities of service users, with a particular focus on employment needs. The potential for Social Enterprises is also being explored.

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**Budget saving:  
£2 million**

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## **Option: Review of Support for Carers**

In the process of conducting a community care assessment, a carer for an individual may be identified. The department has a duty to consider the needs of the carer as part of the overall assessment and the carer has the right to ask for a separate assessment of their own needs. As part of the current assessment process, a carer's assessment generates (through the Resource Allocation System) a carer's budget, a sum of money based on the nature and extent of the impact of the carer role on that individual. This can be paid as a direct payment to carers to support them in their carer role.

The NHS has also been given additional funding to support carers and NHS Wirral has recently commissioned the Wirral Information Resource for Equality and Diversity Carers Support Service to offer short breaks for carers. Carers are now able to access these services through GPs rather than through Adult Social Services.

***The proposal is to review the current process and consider the efficacy of three alternative options:***

- ***the cessation of personal budgets for carers with support for carers being commissioned by the department***
- ***the introduction of an annual grant to carers***
- ***the introduction of a payment to carers based on a banding system that reflects the impact of the carer role on the individual***

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**Budget Saving:  
£250,000**

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# Budget Options

## **Option: Transport Policies for Adults and Children**

The Council provides transport for well over a thousand people across the borough every day; travelling to Council facilities, schools and other services.

***This option will involve a full review of that transport, with a view to stopping providing transport to some or all Council services, and instead requiring the people using the services to either contribute to the cost of the transport or find other means.***

This option will result in a reduced transport service for children and adults. This may result in a potential impact on other Council services as a result of the change.

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**Budget saving:  
£832,000**

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## **Option: Area Teams for Family Support**

Area Teams provide preventative services for vulnerable children and families. The team and partners provide support to these children and families to prevent their situation getting worse. There is some duplication of effort due to the number of teams.

***The option in this area is to reduce the number of Area Teams from 11 to 4, and have them work across the borough based on need.***

The reorganisation will target services more effectively to meet the needs of children and families.

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**Budget saving:  
£200,000**

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# Budget Options

## Option: Schools Music Service

The Council currently provides a Schools Music Service. The service has for many years received a small subsidy from the Council.

***The option in this area is to remove the subsidy and ensure that it brings in enough income to break even. This will be done through increased marketing and seeking sponsorship.***

The risks in this area are that young people may choose to use different services, these risks will be mitigated through promotion and targeting a wider client group.

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**Budget saving:  
£21,000**

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## Option: Oaklands Outdoor Education Centre

The Council currently delivers the Oaklands Outdoor Education Centre service. The service has for many years received a small subsidy from the Council.

***The option in this area is to remove the subsidy and ensure that it brings in enough income to break even. This will be done through increased marketing and seeking sponsorship.***

The risks in this area are that young people may choose to use different services, these risks will be mitigated through promotion and targeting a wider client group.

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**Budget saving:  
£23,000**

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# Budget Options

## **Option: Educational Psychology Service**

The Council provides an educational psychology service, to help all children who have special educational needs.

***The option in this area is to reduce this service while continuing to meet statutory requirements. This will need a more targeted approach.***

Reducing the capacity of this service will have an impact on children, young people and their families who have additional educational needs.

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**Budget saving:  
£80,000**

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## **Option: Foundation Learning**

A programme is offered to schools to develop and then deliver Foundation Learning for those young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, which means not in education, employment or training.

***The option in this area is to stop this programme and target support from the Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance Service.***

This may impact on the Council's effectiveness in ensuring young people are in education, training or employment.

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**Budget saving:  
£133,000**

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# Budget Options

**Option:  
Universal and Targeted  
Commissioning of Parenting  
Services**

The Council invests money with organisations in the community and voluntary sector to provide parenting family support and advisory services, including where families are affected by poverty and disadvantage.

***The option here is to reduce and target these services at those families most at risk of poor outcomes.***

This might result in a reduction in the number of children, young people and their families receiving a service.

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**Budget saving:  
£900,000**

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**Option:  
Schools Budget**

The Council has a budget for Planned Programmed Maintenance, which covers expenditure on maintenance work in schools. The Council also has a 27 year Private Finance Initiative agreement which relates to improvement work to 9 schools. The annual costs for this are covered by government grant, contributions from schools and the Council budget.

***The proposal in this area is to transfer costs currently met by the Council to the Schools Budget.***

While removing considerable pressure from the Council budget, this would mean schools would have to absorb the additional costs.

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**Budget saving:  
£2,750,000**

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# Budget Options

## **Option: School Improvement and Income from Academy Schools**

The focus of the school improvement service is on the core statutory duties of the local authority and traded service with schools for the services that are non-statutory. Over the last couple of years, Wirral has reviewed its statutory duties and costs in relation to its academy schools. Whilst some services have reduced, others are now trading with academies.

***This option is to reduce the level of non-traded school improvement support and training and increase income for those services provided to Academy Schools by increasing what the Council charges.***

The Council provides a number of services to Academy schools which are no longer under the control of the Council including educational social welfare and behaviour support. Applying additional charges would not impact on the quality of services provided to Academy schools. Applying charges to Academy schools would not impact on the quality of services provided.

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**Budget saving: £131,000 plus  
£60,000 in additional income**

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## **Option: Review of Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector Grants**

The voluntary, community and faith sector provide a number of services such as luncheon clubs, advocacy support and day care with funding provided by the Council.

***The proposal is that the Council reviews these services as part of a wider Council approach to commission more targeted and cost effective services based on delivering prevention and early intervention services.***

This proposal will include a review of drugs and alcohol assessment and rehabilitation services to commission services that will deliver better outcomes for individuals and to promote harm reduction, treatment, rehabilitation and recovery. This will include stopping funding for organisation core costs with the focus shifting to delivering improved outcomes for people.

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**Budget saving:  
£820,000**

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# Budget Options

## **Option: Assessment and Care Management**

The Council is reviewing its assessment and care management process working closely with the NHS to improve the experience of care service users and make quicker the process from referral to support plan.

*The proposal is that through making the process more efficient, it would be possible to respond to financial pressures by reducing the number of social workers and assessment support workers, although it is accepted that this would potentially impact on the level of service provided.*

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**Budget saving:  
£500,000**

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## **Option: Review of Residential Care for Learning Disabilities**

Many Councils have changed their services for learning disabilities, and developed supported living opportunities as an alternative to residential care. The main principles of supported living are that people with learning disabilities own or rent their home and have control over the support they get, who they live with and how they live their lives.

*This option in this area is to develop supported housing arrangements for people with Learning Disabilities as an alternative to residential care.*

This option seeks to balance the needs of the people involved to increase choice and control, to redesign services that are out dated and not fit for purpose.

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**Budget saving:  
£300,000**

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# Budget Options

## Option: Review of Equipment Services

The Council provides equipment for people such as wheelchairs and frames.

***The option here would be to develop a shared service with the NHS to make a saving of £100,000 on VAT payments.***

This option would have no impact on the service.

## Option: Review of Emergency Duty

The Council is reviewing its arrangements in the way emergency duty, or 'out of hours', care management systems are developed.

***The proposal here is that the current arrangements are reviewed to investigate a shared service with the NHS.***

This option would have no impact on the service.

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**Budget Saving:  
£100,000**

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**Budget Saving:  
£100,000**

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## What You Told Us:

***“The Council should look into the use of its buildings, and try to provide services from a smaller, more cost effective range of locations. The Council should try to make sure that no communities were left isolated if facilities near them were closed.”***

# Budget Options

## Option: Youth and Play Services

The Council provides and maintains 6 Play Schemes and 14 youth facilities, as well as extensive outreach projects. These services are available for all children and young people in the borough, and are also backed up with further services provided by the voluntary and community sector.

***The option in this area is to review provision of Play Schemes, reduce the outreach service and integrate all youth clubs in to the 4 main Youth Hubs, where services would be centralised. It is further proposed that the youth opportunity fund should be stopped. This fund provides opportunities for organisations to bid for funding to deliver projects for young people.***

This service will be aligned with the new Youth Zone planned for Birkenhead.

This would reduce the number of easily accessible youth facilities. There is potential for partners and the voluntary sector to provide services which would replace the reduction in Council services, which the Council could potentially help fund. The Council also plan to invest in a central Youth Zone to provide improved and alternative provision.

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**Budget saving:  
£1,178,000**

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## Option: Youth Challenge

Youth Challenge (Positive Activities for Young People) provides universal and targeted services to Young People – outreach, risk taking behaviour (alcohol, substance misuse), Big Nights, Arts and Drama.

***The option is to reduce the budget for these services.***

There may be a reduction in the number of young people taking part in positive activities. The Council would seek to ensure that services are accessible by continuing to target the more vulnerable and at risk young people.

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**Budget saving:  
£400,000**

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## Option:

### **Children's Centres and Sure Start**

Wirral has 16 Children's Centres and a number of smaller satellite centres. The centres provide a wide range of services, covering targeted specialised services as well as 'universal services'; and can be accessed by all young people and their families.

*The option here is to reduce universal services from children's centres and charge for most universal services which are provided. This would further include the release of a number of satellite children's centres including Manor Primary School, Bedford Drive Primary School, New Brighton Primary School, Lingham Primary School, Eastway Primary School, Hoylake Holy Trinity Primary School, Oxton and New Ferry bases.*

There are a number of proposals regarding Children's Centres, and the reduction of the Sure Start budget, all of which are designed to protect the specialised, targeted services for the most vulnerable families.

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**Budget saving:**  
**£2,172,000**

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## **What You Told Us:**

***“You said we should look at non-universal, optional services and investigate if they could be reduced or stopped.”***

**Option:  
Help and Advice for Older People**

The Council provides a service for people who are over 65, which is called the 'promoting older people's independence network', or 'POPIN'. This service is about giving older people support about benefits, and how to access other voluntary and Council services.

***The option in this area is to stop providing the service, and investigate using voluntary and community organisations to provide the service on our behalf.***

This service aims to increase independence, improve access to health and wellbeing services, and also to delay the need for more intensive care as people get older.

It's also true that voluntary and community organisations are already providing similar services and could fill the gap that this service leaves behind. In addition Council One Stop shops can offer similar advice and information.

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**Budget saving:  
£350,000**

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**Option:  
Careers, Education Information,  
Advice and Guidance**

The Council provides a wide range of careers advice to young people across the borough, including 1:1 information and advice to vulnerable and NEET young people, providing an interactive web portal offering information on career choices and providing tailored training programmes.

***The option in this area would be to redesign and reduce these services, to ensure the targeted work still took place at the level defined by the Council's statutory duties.***

The service would be redesigned to ensure that those people at greatest risk of becoming NEET were targeted to receive the most support.

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**Budget saving:  
£1,000,000**

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# Budget Options

## **Option: Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities**

The Council provides funding for children with disabilities to go on short breaks, which provide respite both for the children but also their carers and / or families. These services are all bought in from the private and voluntary sector.

***The option in this area would be to reduce the number and range of the short breaks which are funded for children with disabilities.***

This change will mean the budget can be planned more effectively, and that the Council can make sure we only 'buy' the services we need, it will also mean that less money will be invested with the voluntary sector and young people will not have the same choice or access to the service they get at the moment.

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**Budget saving:  
£300,000**

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## **Option: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**

This is a comprehensive specialist service to children and adolescents who require mental health support. The service is provided in addition to statutory health provision and involves additional support being provided to children in need, children in care, children with a plan for adoption and children with a disability. Additionally, CAMHS has direct responsibility for delivering a specialist fostering programme, Fostering Futures, for some of the most vulnerable children in care.

***This option is to reduce the service by a third.***

There is a risk that some of the more vulnerable children, young people and families will not receive timely therapeutic intervention in response to their needs.

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**Budget saving:  
£250,000**

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## **Option: Revenues and Benefits**

The Council's Revenues and Benefits Service is responsible for the calculation and payment of benefits of approximately £160 million, as well as other income including the financial assessment, charging and recovery of accommodation and support charges.

The service is also responsible for the raising, administration and collection of £350 million gross income from Council Tax, Business Rates and Accounts Receivable invoices. This includes amounts funded from Council Tax benefits and other relief.

***This option is to reduce staffing levels in line with the impact of changes to the welfare system.***

This option is about rationalising the approach to delivering the service in light to changes of the welfare system whilst continuing to deliver a statutory level of service.

***Further options in this area are to raise income by increasing the court costs the Council charges to its debtors from £65 to £75, and reviewing the Council Tax discounts and/or exemptions in place for empty properties, households over 70 years of age and those on low incomes as well as Discretionary Rate Relief.***

The Council would need to consider how this option would impact on residents, debtors, social and private landlords and the local economy. Changes have the potential to impact financially on all the above, apart from those defined as vulnerable.

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**Budget Saving:  
up to £11 million**

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## **Option: Libraries and One Stop Shops**

Wirral Council has a network of 13 community One Stop Shops in convenient locations throughout the borough. Services accessible via One Stop Shops include Adult Social Services, Anti-Social Behaviour team, Blue Badge scheme, Council Tax, Consumer Advice, education and welfare benefits, electoral register, Family Information Service, Fire Service, Housing Options service and home improvements, Housing and Council Tax Benefit, Housing for rent via Property Pool Plus, job applications, Job Points, Leisure Services, Licensing, NHS Services, parking fines and appeals, payments, Pest Control / Environmental Health, Recycling, Rubbish and Waste, Registrar Services, Tell Us Once, Tourism and Wirral Partnership Homes.

The Council's 24 libraries deliver a face to face service across the borough from a number of locations and offer reference facilities, an audio-visual service, home reader service, exhibition spaces, meeting rooms, study areas and a coffee area.

A programme is now underway to bring together Wirral's libraries and One Stop Shop service. The benefits to the Council and the public in merging One Stop Shops and libraries include staff being generically trained to offer a wider range of enquiries.

***The options in this area include: further merging of libraries and One Stop Shops, the reduction of opening hours, particularly around Christmas and New Year, and the increased use of volunteers in the running of the facilities. The option of community asset transfer will also be part of this option. The Council also propose to reduce the book fund.***

Further mergers would result in a reduction in the number of staff required at each merged site, as well as potential costs for improvements to merged buildings. Further library and One Stop Shop mergers would compliment the work already underway with a number of pilot sites and further enable users to access a number of services at one location. The option is unlikely to affect the council's statutory responsibility for providing a library service.

A reduction of opening hours will impact on staffing resources and require consultation with them, as well as users and partners. A reduction in Christmas and New Year opening hours would have minimum impact on library users. A single one stop shop will remain open during the period for emergency contact.

The option could also impact on our staff, users, partners and voluntary organisations. A high level of consultation would therefore be required. The service will look into other service delivery alternatives, such as working with partners and local groups, as well as maximising the use of volunteers.

# Budget Options

A reduction in the book fund has the potential to impact on member satisfaction and service reputation.

An e-book service is now available which may replicate 'hard copy' books available. The service will ensure statutory levels of books remain.

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**Budget Saving:**  
**£629,000**

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## TRANSPORT POLICIES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

**BUDGET SAVING:** £2,000,000 over 6 years for home to school transport.  
£500,000 over 2 years for adult transport.

### DESCRIPTION OF OPTION

The Council provides transport for over a thousand people across the borough every day; travelling to schools, colleges, Council facilities and other services.

***This option will involve a full review of that transport, with a view to stopping providing transport to some Council services, and instead requiring the people using the services to either contribute to the cost of the transport or find other means.***

For home to school transport including post 16 college transport the proposal is to change the Council's transport policies so that the Council provides statutory transport which supports those with the greatest need. The proposal is to phase the changes based on academic year, commencing 2014/15.

The home to school transport has a budget of £4.6m – savings proposed are.

- The removal of discretionary denominational transport. £180,000 phased over 6 academic years.
- The removal of Post 16 transport (non SEN). £132,000 phased over 3 academic years.
- A reduction in the number of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) eligible for transport. This includes the removal of all Post 16 transport for students with SEN. £1.7m phased over a period of 6 academic years.

For adult transport the proposal is to reduce the requirement for transport provision through application of a new transport policy and encouraging those who are able to use public transport or motobility vehicles and this will allow greater flexibility and independence in line with personalisation.

### RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS

Department for Education home to school benchmarking data spend per capita illustrates a relatively high spend in Wirral compared to other Local Authorities: Wirral £91, Statistical Neighbour Average £77; Lowest £31; Highest £93.

Wirral has higher SEN population than most authorities (Percentage of children with Statements Wirral 3.3%, National 2.2%). The current policy provides transport for all children with a statement, other Local Authorities do not.

For home to school transport there is no national volume benchmarking data available. However Wirral's data would be expected to be high as most LAs have amended their home to school transport policies removing of denominational and reducing Post 16 and SEN transport.

For adult transport the adoption of a refreshed adult transport policy will encourage greater independence and lead to more effective use of this resource in line with personalisation. The policy will encourage those who are able to use public transport or motobility vehicles to do so. The Council will continue to support individuals who have no alternative means of transport.

### IMPACT

This option would result in a reduced transport service for children and adults. This may result in a potential impact on other Council services as a result of the change.

The option would result in a reduction in School Escort Staff (part time staff) commensurate with a reduction in the numbers of students transport and vehicles contracted through the proposed phased approach.

The proposed changes have the potential to impact on the educational attainment of students, life chances, reduced choice and parental employment opportunities. Other potential impacts are on school attendance, school resources, OFSTED inspections and Department for Education assessments. There is potential to impact on other Council services such as Education Social Welfare, Special Educational Needs teams, Social Work teams, Youth Outreach and Youth Offending Teams. There may be carbon reduction implications as more children may be driven to school with associated road safety implications.

The option would also result in a reduction in Drivers and Passenger Assistants (part time staff) commensurate with the proposed reduction in the numbers of adults transported.

Characteristics of the groups who would be impacted upon include age, disability, religion or belief and socio-economic status. Children, families and adults in all wards would potential be affected.

There is also potential for more families or adults requiring assistance from voluntary and community sector organisations following the proposed reduction in services.

## **MITIGATION**

For home to school transport students and parents will be made aware of the proposed policy change before making choices to start /change school at reception or year 7 or commence college or sixth form courses from September 2014 onwards. Phasing of the policy change ensures that transport will not be withdrawn from those currently eligible. Use of travel training in a phased supported way can increase confidence in using public transport for other purposes and can help to prepare the young person for life after education and into adulthood.

For adult transport the policy has been developed to promote independence across all areas of service provision and seeks to ensure as many people live and travel as independently as possible within their community. The Council will continue to support individuals who have no alternative means of transport.

Information is available from other Councils who have carried out such policy changes.

**OPTION: AREA TEAMS FOR FAMILY SUPPORT**

**BUDGET SAVING: £200,000**

### **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

Area Teams provide preventative services for vulnerable children and families. The team and partners provide support to these children and families to prevent their situation getting worse.

***The option in this area is to reduce the number of Area Teams from 11 to 4, remove some duplication and have them work across the borough based on need.***

### **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

Area Teams were established to support early intervention with children and families through encouraging agencies in using the Common Assessment Framework and Team Around the Child process. They currently have a budget of £517,000.

The role of Area Teams is to support a multi-agency team in each of 11 areas and. The Area Team Leaders (ATLs) provide training, support, quality assurance and reporting of activity in each area supported by Information Sharing Coordinators (ISCs). There is an Area Team in 11 areas in Wirral (matched with area forum geography) and supported by 7.5 ATLs and 7.5 ISCs (some areas are managed under 1 ATL).

Wirral has recently had a peer challenge facilitated by the Childrens Improvement Board which looked at family support and area teams. Colleagues from other local authorities examined our services, processes and procedures and resources in this area and how we were evidencing impact on outcomes for children. The peer challenge fed back many positives about the workforce and the various services but that there needed to be improved targeting and coordination across all services in early intervention, duplication of access points, services and processes needed to be reduced and there needed to be an improved single access route to these services for children and families. The Area Teams needed to be built upon as part of this process, and move from a current facilitative and development role to more directive and managed part of an early intervention strategy.

The department is currently undertaking a review of its services in this area which has involved a detailed needs analysis, review of current best models of practice, developing improved performance and outcome impact processes and a more targeted approach and co-ordinated approach to accessing services and a more coherent evidenced-based model for family support.

The Allen review: Early Intervention: Next Steps (January 2011) and Smart Investment: Massive Savings (July 2011) clearly evidences the impact that that effective early intervention can have on children and families and the longer term cost benefits.

The current thinking is that the Area Teams will evolve into a 4 district based service which is part of a multi-agency locality team model where all requests for service under the early

intervention strategy are accessed through a single point of access in each locality. The current onus on agencies to complete Common Assessments will be removed and undertaken by a member of the locality team who will be trained in a Family Assessment model and who will coordinate a plan with agencies around that family. Where necessary, a member of the team will act as lead professional. Targeted family support will also be provided through the locality team as part of a service re-configuration.

## **IMPACT**

The reorganisation would target services more effectively to meet the needs of children and families. The proposed savings (reducing ATLs and ISCs to 4 posts – one per locality) would lead to an improved service for children and families through improved management of resources. The impact on staff would be 3.5 Area Team Leaders and 3.5 Information Sharing Coordinators.

The evidence from other local authorities is that the proposed approach improves targeting of hard-to reach and hard to engage families earlier and reduces the escalation of concerns to children's social care.

## **MITIGATION**

Area Teams would continue to liaise with agencies who work with children who are adversely affected by poverty, parental and family drug and alcohol use, domestic violence, learning disability and mental health. The proposed service will allow support to reach those families earlier before formal intervention from social care.

The Children's Trust would lead this process on a strategic level as the engagement of partners is critical to its success at a time when all public sector services are under financial pressure but this would provide an opportunity for shared services and approaches.

Where services are currently commissioned from the voluntary, community and faith sector, they would need to be key members of the locality teams as the services need to align with the children and families at need of targeted support. This may mean challenges and capacity building in the local VCF sector to develop the services they provide with hard to reach and hard to engage families through a range of evidenced based interventions and how to report evidence of impact on outcomes.

**OPTION: REMOVING SUBSIDIES SCHOOLS MUSIC SERVICE**

**BUDGET SAVING: £21,000**

### **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

The Council currently provides a Schools Music Service. The service has for many years received a small subsidy from the Council.

***The option in this area is to remove the subsidy and ensure that it brings in enough income to break even. This will be done through increased marketing and seeking sponsorship.***

The Music Service has a budget of £825,000 which is mostly funded by school contributions and grants. Currently in the Music Service there is a full time Business Manager, a part time secretary (2 days per week), a head of Music Service and 14.2 FTE music teachers. Music Educators are employed on a contractual basis to provide instrumental tuition.

The Music Service receives a grant from the Arts Council to support the delivery of the Wider Opportunities programme – a national programme whereby all Year 4 pupils have access to a year of music tuition. Currently Wirral has more schools (94% of primary schools) participating in the Wider Opportunities programme than almost all local authorities. In order to receive the grant the Music Service had to consult with other music providers to form a Music Hub. Currently Wirral Council and Cheshire West & Chester (CWaC) Council are the main leads in the Hub. This grant will reduce over a 3 year period. In 2012/13 the grant is £571,900, in 2013/14 the grant will be £120,000 less.

The Music Service was completely restructured in 2010 / 2011. The service had been previously identified for reconfiguration as there was a year-on-year overspend of approximately £100,000.

The Arts Council grant can not be guaranteed in the future so plans need to be in place so that income generation exceeds expenditure so making the service financially stable.

### **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

There is a small net subsidy for the Schools Music Service from the Council of £20,600. This savings proposal would cease any net subsidy from the Children and Young People's Budget in light of agreements in place with schools to pay for the third term of the Wider Opportunities programme. This, together with other income generating initiatives should offset the grant reduction and provide the budget saving required.

Options for income generation could include:

- Increasing the hourly music tuition rate from £36 / hour per class for 10 weeks to £40.
- Generating income by charging for children attending Music Centres.

- Actively marketing the services to secondary schools to increase the take up to more than four schools.
- Increasing the availability of small group instrument tuition available for parents to purchase out of school hours (evenings and weekends).

Other alternatives would be to look at reducing leadership and staffing costs by combining the service with Cheshire West and Cheshire. As a minimum 2 leadership posts plus a small amount of administrative salary costs could be saved. The Council could also reduce costs by employing Music Educators to deliver aspects of the Wider Opportunities programme.

### **IMPACT**

This savings proposal would cease any net subsidy from the Children and Young People's Budget. The Music Service already has agreements in place with schools to pay for the third term of the Wider Opportunities programme. This, together with other income generating initiatives should offset the grant reduction and provide the budget saving required. The Wider Opportunities programme is optional for schools. Schools who do not take up this offer are preventing Year 4 pupils having access to a universal service.

In respect of the Schools Music Service, schools are currently responsible for passing on charges for instrumental tuition to parents or using their remissions policies to provide tuition to pupils free of charge. If the Music Service is to provide instrumental tuition at Music Centres and after school the current local authority policy will need to be reviewed as the service will have an increase in costs if tuition is given free to some pupils.

### **MITIGATION**

Where schools do not implement a remissions policy there could be fewer pupils in poorer wards accessing music tuition. However, Pupil Premium received by schools may be used

**OPTION: REMOVAL OF SUBSIDY - OAKLANDS OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE**

**BUDGET SAVING: £23,000**

**DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

The Council currently delivers the Oaklands Outdoor Education Centre service. The service has for many years received a small subsidy from the Council.

***The option in this area is to remove the subsidy and ensure that it brings in enough income to break even. This will be done through increased marketing and seeking sponsorship.***

***Alternative options would be to:***

- ***Close the provision with a view to renting or selling the centre;***
- ***Enter into a formal procurement process to seek a preferred provider who could deliver at a further reduced cost;***
- ***Enter into a formal agreement with another interested 3<sup>rd</sup> party to provide a shared service.***

The Oaklands Outdoor Education Centre has a budget of £434,000. This is largely covered by income generated from schools and other users (£370,000).

The Centre has a successful 28 year history of providing high quality outdoor education and is well supported by schools. Its vision is to encourage learning about self, others and the environment through a wide range of adventurous experiences and activities such as canoeing, climbing, expeditions, gorge walking, mine exploration, sea level traversing and orienteering.

The Centre has had a significant new build extension (2006, Lottery Funding, £448,000) and a major refurbishment (2009, local authority funding in excess of £350,000).

The centre is staffed as follows and equates to 4.7 FTE:

- |                             |                       |                   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| ▪ Head of Centre (2)        | Full time (job share) | 52 weeks per year |
| ▪ Deputy Head of Centre (1) | Full time             | 43 weeks per year |
| ▪ Site Manager (1)          | Full time             | 52 weeks per year |
| ▪ Administrator (1)         | Part time (16 hours)  | 43 weeks per year |
| ▪ Instructors (2)           | Full time & 0.7       | 43 weeks per year |
| ▪ Cooks (2)                 | 50 hours per week     | 43 weeks per year |

In addition to the above permanent staff there is a panel of freelance instructors that the centre accesses as and when the need arises.

**RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

In previous years the Centre has reduced expenditure and increased its income. A subsidy in excess of £261,000 in 1993 has been reduced year on year to £64,000 in 2012-2013 (including an asset rentals charge of £21,800). Following previous public consultation, the centre was tasked to reduce the reliance on council subsidy to zero by 2014. The Centre is on track to achieve this target of which the saving of £23,000 is part.

The savings proposal is based on retaining the service in house and continuing current arrangements whilst generating additional income. The alternative options with regard to working with others to provide the service would potentially provide the opportunity to creatively sustain and develop the provision.

If the Centre were to close the following risks would need to be considered:

- It would have an impact on the level of access to education provision for Wirral children and young people and in the potential value offered to the education sector in terms of specialist outdoor provision;
- Whilst closure of the centre would potentially generate a capital receipt or rent, the level of receipt or rent could be adversely affected by issues relating to condition and the current economic climate;
- There is a risk of potential claw back for facilities which have been built with grant monies. The Centre has had lottery funding which would have to be deducted from sale of site or rental;
- All staff would have to be either redeployed, which might not be possible because of their skills and/or their physical location, or be made redundant;
- Until the centre was sold or leased they would have to be maintained and secured, therefore some of the total premises related costs would still be incurred.

National benchmarking data is not available for this type of service.

## **IMPACT**

The option in this area is to remove the subsidy and ensure that it brings in enough income to break even.

The Centre has an excellent reputation of working with vulnerable groups of young people with emotional, physical and behavioural issues. A potential negative impact of alternative options would be a reduction in provision for disabled children, children with complex learning needs and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Children receiving this service will live in all wards.

## **MITIGATION**

This would potentially increase costs to schools. This may be mitigated for vulnerable children by the increase in Pupil Premium allocation to schools.



**OPTION: EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE**

**BUDGET SAVING: £80,000**

### **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

The Council provides an educational psychology service, to help children who have special educational needs.

***The option in this area is to reduce this service while continuing to meet statutory requirements. This will need a more targeted approach.***

The Education Psychology Service has a budget of £728,800. A budget saving of £80,000 is proposed and would mean the loss of approximately one post.

The current establishment is of 10.6fte. Three years ago it was 13.5fte. There is currently a vacant senior Educational Psychologist (EP) post; a maingrade EP post is currently being advertised.

### **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

DFE benchmarking data indicates that Wirral's costs are the average of its statistical neighbours at £15 per pupil. The Council must employ EPs to provide advice for statutory assessments of SEN. The Council undertakes more assessments and maintains more statements (3.3% vs 2.2%), and has more pupils in specialist schools than the national average (58% vs 28%).

Alternative options would be to:

- Cost and charge the preventative element to schools and settings and the service given an income target to meet. Some soft market testing is underway with trading but this is to create extra capacity;
- The pragmatics of sharing services with other authorities, with each authority having unique, small-scale service configurations, means that sharing individual psychologists would not be viable or return savings. Sharing management and supervision arrangements with other authorities may have possibilities, for example, employing one team leader across two authorities.

### **IMPACT**

The impact of the proposed budget saving would be to reduce the service's preventative capacity. Statutory work, already dominant, would remain the priority and take up most capacity. The Council's extensive specialist SEN provision keeps demand for statutory work high. An unintended consequence could be to push an already rising demand for statutory work (up 25% over the last 2 years) as schools, parents and other stakeholders perceive likely reductions in provision and services. The impact of reduced capacity would be distributed across the borough.

A positive impact of the proposed change will be improved prioritization for targeted and specialist services. The main risk is around changing the assumptions of service users and stakeholders about what has been the traditional role, and response times, of the service. An increase in legal challenges to local authority decisions about SEN is highly likely.

## **MITIGATION**

The development of a single gateway should help mitigate the impact of the proposed budget saving.

**OPTION:**                               **FOUNDATION LEARNING**

**BUDGET SAVING:**               **£133,000**

### **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

A programme is offered to schools to develop and then deliver Foundation Learning for those young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, which means not in education, employment or training.

***The option in this area is to stop this programme and target support from the Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance Service.***

This saving would cease the support provided to schools from the end of the current academic year.

Support for Foundation Learning in schools is provided from this budget at a cost of £133,000. Foundation learning is a programme to support vocational subject learning and personal social development, to focus help for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET (not in Education Employment or Training) to achieve aspirations such as college, apprenticeship and employment.

### **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

Schools have been piloting work around young people who are at risk of becoming NEET, using a Risk of NEET Indicator - RONI. This would in future enable resources to be better targeting from within the Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance budget (CEIAG).

### **IMPACT**

This option could impact on the Council's effectiveness in ensuring young people are in education, training or employment. Foundation Learning supports young people to encourage and maximise employment and training opportunities. There is a risk that this group of young people may become less engaged.

No staff will be affected. Funding is used in schools mainly to buy off site learning. A significant proportion of this funding is spent by schools on off site provision. Some will be provided by the VCF sector.

### **MITIGATION**

The impact of the budget savings proposal would be mitigated by the approach to targeting resources from within the Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance budget (CEIAG).

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**OPTION: UNIVERSAL AND TARGETED COMMISSIONING - PARENTING**

**BUDGET SAVING: £900,000**

## **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

The Council invests money with organisations in the community and voluntary sector to provide parenting, family support and advisory services including where families are affected by poverty and disadvantage.

***The option in this area is to reduce these services and target them at those families most at risk of poor outcomes.***

A 50% budget saving is proposed, £700,000 in 2013-14 and £200,000 in 2014-15. This would further reduce the preventative capacity within this field and statutory work, already dominant, would be the main focus. It would mean a reduction in the provision of parenting, family support and advisory services, and that these services would be targeted at families with the greatest need, where intervention will be most effective in reducing family breakdown and the need for specialist services.

The Council is also looking at working with other local authorities to jointly commission services, this has been piloted and will be reviewed.

## **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

There is limited financial benchmarking data available to compare against other local authorities. However, locally benchmarking is done quarterly for comparison and contract monitoring. The commissioning intentions for 2013-14 have been developed using local data. The outputs and outcomes continue to show the difference these services are making, as consistently over 90% of participants have rated the services as successful in achieving outcomes.

Wider consultation has taken place with Children's Centres, Youth Offending Service and other commissioners. From consultation, and extensive ongoing dialogue, with parent/carers, young people and professionals issues have been raised such as parenting/family support and behaviour do indeed contribute most widely and greatly to needs escalating and subsequently a need for more intensive interventions and support. Furthermore, there has been expressed demand from statutory services for more early intervention/prevention services that provide and operate at the lower ends of the spectrum of need in more flexible ways, in particular delivery times. Some of the evidence of this is the cost of spot purchasing family support services procured through the contracts section to support the statutory family support services.

The rationale for the proposed savings seeks to reduce the investment made by the Council, whilst retaining a focus on delivering successful outcomes, early intervention and targeted services where most needed.

## **IMPACT**

The impact of this budget saving would be to further reduce the preventative capacity within this field and statutory work, already dominant, would overshadow all work. It would mean a reduction in the provision of parenting and family support services, and focusing on a higher level of need with more targeted service provision.

A positive issue will be improved prioritisation for targeted and specialist services. The main risk is around changing the assumptions of service users and stakeholders about what has been available under the EIG family support service. As the commissioning moves to target families with a higher level of need existing services users may not meet the required threshold to access the higher level of targeted support. This will result in a reduction on the number of children, young people and their families receiving a service which in-turn could mean that there is an increase in referrals to Social Care, and an increase in the number of young people becoming first time entrants into the Youth Justice System.

The impact of reduced capacity would be distributed across the borough. Also, the proposed reduction would result in less money being invested within the voluntary sector and this could potentially affect our current providers of services. The impact of this may have a disproportionate effect on the individual organisations.

The proposed budget saving would impact on one member of staff.

## **MITIGATION**

The Council would seek to ensure that services are accessible by continuing to target the more vulnerable and at risk children, young people and families such as young carers, black and minority ethnic families, children who have experienced domestic violence and those at the edge of care. Referrals to services will be managed centrally to ensure that appropriate families in need of support are accessing the interventions. Access to any service will be based on need.

**OPTION:                                   SCHOOLS BUDGET - PLANNED PROGRAMMED MAINTENANCE AND PFI AFFORDABILITY GAP**

**BUDGET SAVING:                   £2,750,000**

### **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

The Council has a £650,000 budget for Planned Programmed Maintenance, which covers expenditure in schools on preventative work around legionella, asbestos removal, electricity regulations (NICIEC testing), emergencies and vacant buildings. Currently £200,000 of this is funded from the Schools Budget.

***This option is to charge future costs of Planned Programmed Maintenance to the Schools Budget.***

There is a 27 year Private Finance Initiative (PFI) agreement until 2031 for 9 schools. The current contracted costs are £10.6 million, covered by a government grant of £5.4m, contributions from schools of £2.9m and the remaining £2.3m paid by the Council.

***This option is to charge all PFI costs currently paid for by the Council to the Schools Budget from 2015/16, resulting in a saving to the Council of £2.3 million.***

### **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

These are costs that are paid by the Council, although they could be charged to schools.

The alternatives to the proposed options would be to:

- Cease PPM activities and require any essential costs to be met by individual schools;
- Reduce PFI contract specifications to reduce overall costs;
- Put in place a PFI contract extension to reduce annual rentals.

### **IMPACT**

The PFI contracts concern the assets of 8 secondary and 1 primary school, whilst PPM may impact on all school assets.

These options have no direct staffing implications, although transfers when implemented may require other school support services to be reduced.

These are significant costs for the Schools Budget to absorb at a time when there is no growth. This may cause additional turbulence within school funding or reductions in other support for schools e.g. SEN.

### **MITIGATION**

There would be a phased transfer of Planned Programme Maintenance and Private Finance Initiative costs, this would enable time for appropriate plans to be made within the Schools Budget.

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**OPTION: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND ACADEMY TRADED INCOME**

**BUDGET SAVING: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SAVINGS - £131,000  
ACADEMY TRADED INCOME - £60,000**

### **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

The Council funded school improvement budget is £1,547,900. Over the last two years there have been reductions in the school improvement budget in both resources and staff reflecting changes in government policy and the academies programme. This has led to a marked reduction in the support and challenge the Council offers to schools. The current budget of £1,547,900, along with an additional £1,034,400 agreed by the Schools Forum funds both statutory duties on the local authority in relation to schools and early intervention activities.

The focus of the school improvement service is on the core statutory duties of the local authority (maintaining standards in maintained schools and statutory assessments), whilst developing a new traded service with schools for the services that are non-statutory. This traded service, Education Quality (EQ), has achieved 94% buyback from Wirral schools over the last two years. EQ encompasses support for professionals and volunteers in schools through a range of services including, Safeguarding Support and Training; Governor Support Services; Leadership and Management Programmes; Whole School Improvement and Standards; Subject Leader Networks; Data Support and Analysis; Teaching, Learning, Curriculum and Assessment; Coordination of Wider Workforce Professional Development; Risk Management and Advice on Educational Visits; and Swimming Coordination. EQ is currently a partnership between the local authority and its member schools and has an annual turnover in excess of £1m. The Localism Act 2011 provides a range of opportunities for the future of EQ, such as a social enterprise and other school traded services.

***This option is to reduce the level of school improvement support and training provided to achieve a saving of £131,000.***

Over the last couple of years, Wirral has reviewed its statutory duties and costs in relation to its academy schools. Whilst some services have reduced others are now trading with academies.

***This option would also generate additional income of over £60,000 from services traded to Academy schools.***

### **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

DFE benchmarking data indicate that School Improvement is a cost area spending above average compared to statistical neighbours (£40 per pupil compared to an average of £21).

- Provisional attainment results at the end of EYFS, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, Key Stage 4 and Key Stage are the highest ever for Wirral.

- The gap between pupils in receipt of free school meals and non free school meals has narrowed at the end of each primary key stage.
- Attainment against the 3 primary floor target measures (English & Mathematic L4+, 2 levels progress in English and 2 levels progress in Mathematics) has increased this year meeting the Local Authority FFTD (Fisher Family Trust Data) targets.
- At the time of writing this report at least 70% of primary, secondary and special schools have been judged as good or better which is well above national averages.
- No maintained schools are currently in an Ofsted category.

Some other local authorities have commissioned out a range of their statutory school improvement functions to private providers or schools themselves. The evidence of success of this is mixed, with some initial savings financially to the council, but typically an increase in the need for statutory intervention in its schools.

## **IMPACT**

There are no direct staffing implications as a result of this change. School improvement does contribute significantly to the budget at Acre Lane.

The main risk is around attainment outcomes for around 60,000 youngsters across Wirral. This could then potentially impact on individual schools which would then be vulnerable to being placed in an Ofsted category.

The school improvement budget also contributes to supporting Wirral's largest group of volunteers, school governors.

## **MITIGATION**

Most savings proposed are one off costs in the current financial year. There is a continued focus on improving the targeted early intervention in maintained schools and improving and expanding the traded services to all schools.

**OPTION:**                               **YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICES**

**BUDGET SAVING:**               **£1,178,000**

### **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

The option in this area is to review provision of Play Schemes, reduce the outreach service and integrate all youth clubs into the 4 main Youth Hubs, where services would be centralised. It is further proposed that the Youth Opportunity Fund should be stopped. This fund provides opportunities for organisations to bid for funding to deliver projects for young people. This service will be aligned with the New Youth Zone planned for Birkenhead.

### **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

DFE benchmarking data indicate that Universal Services for young people in Wirral are high cost - spend per head of £78 compared with a statistical neighbour average of £39.

Reviewing the provisions as detailed, a budget saving of £923,000 will be achieved within the Youth Service and £255,000 within the Play Service.

### **IMPACT**

The proposal would reduce the number of easily accessible youth facilities. It would cease the Youth Opportunity Fund, close 11 Youth Clubs, reduce Outreach, Konnectabus and management and focus provision to young people around the 4 Youth Hubs. The New Youth Zone in Birkenhead will provide a major enhanced service for young people in Wirral.

The proposal would also impact greatly on the current level of staff within the service.

Withdrawing local authority resources from youth and play provision is sensitive. Most Youth Clubs have been in operation for decades and are well embedded in local communities and valued by them.

### **MITIGATION**

There is potential for partners and the voluntary sector to provide services which would replace the reduction in Council services, which the Council could potentially help fund.

**6.0 Other Risks**

**OPTION: YOUTH CHALLENGE**

**BUDGET SAVING: £400,000**

### **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

The current budget for Youth Challenge (Positive Activities for Young People) is £605,800. The service provides universal and targeted services to Young People – outreach, risk taking behaviour (alcohol, substance misuse), Big Nights, Arts and Drama.

***The option is to reduce the budget for Youth Challenge services.***

A budget reduction of two thirds is proposed over two years.

### **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

DfE Benchmarking data indicate that services for Young People are high cost compared to statistical neighbours – with a spend per head of £101 compared to the average of £78.

Work with other local authorities to jointly commission services has already been piloted and this will be reviewed.

### **IMPACT**

The impact of this reduction would be to reduce preventative capacity. As the commissioning moves to target young people with a higher level of need existing service users may not meet the required threshold to access this targeted support, meaning a reduction in the number of young people taking part in positive activities and achieving accredited outcomes. It may therefore result in more young people's needs not being addressed at a lower level, resulting in referrals to high cost services operating at greater levels of need, an increase in anti-social behaviour and number of first time entrants into the Youth Justice System. A positive issue will be improved prioritization for targeted and specialist services.

The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment benchmarking data indicates that currently:

- “Alcohol is a significant problem for children and young people in Wirral”.
- Wirral's teenage conception rate in 2010 (47.3/1,000) was higher than both the North West average.
- The number of young people in Wirral who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is higher in Wirral compared to national and regional averages).
- The most recent NEET figure for Wirral was 8.8% (September 2012).

The proposed reduction will result in less money being invested within the voluntary sector and this could affect our current providers of services which are Involve Northwest, Birkenhead Youth Club, The Bank, and Grange Baptist Church. Statutory Partners affected are Merseyside Fire and Rescue. Council departments affected by these proposals are Sports Development and Integrated Youth Support (YOS and Universal Support).

This proposed budget saving would impact on one member of staff who has been seconded from a partner organisation.

## **MITIGATION**

Consultation has already taken place with commissioners such as the Youth Offending Service to identify and agree priorities.

The Council would seek to ensure that services are accessible by continuing to target the more vulnerable and at risk young people. Referrals to services will be managed centrally through Area Teams to ensure that appropriate young people in need of support are accessing the interventions. Access to any service will be based on need. The current round of commissioning already seeks to provide targeted Youth Challenge services in those areas that are most in need i.e. high levels of child poverty, teenage pregnancy.

**OPTION: CHILDREN'S CENTRES AND SURE START**

**BUDGET SAVING: Children's Centres - £1,096,000  
Sure Start - £1,076,000**

### **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

Children's Centres and Sure Start has a combined budget of £8,246,000 and from this area total savings of £2,172,000 are proposed.

#### **Children's Centres - £1,096,000**

***This option would:***

***Reduce universal services in children's centres, retaining those covered by charges.***

Early support for some families could be missed, but universal services would remain available and affordable.

***Reduce early literacy support to families by removing the Bookstart scheme from Children's Centres***

Bookstart is a nationwide scheme, run by the national charity Booktrust, and managed in Wirral by the Council's Library Service. Removing the programme from Children's Centres would save money and mean that the young people would still be able to access the programme through their local library.

***Stop providing bilingual support for children aged under 5 years, where English is an additional language***

Children with English as an Additional Language would not get the early support and help to address language and communication difficulties through their local children's centre, and would instead have to seek the support through the voluntary, community or faith sectors. Support would still be available from the Council's Minority Ethnic Achievement Team.

***Relocate staff based at Bidston St James Children's Centre to Brassey Gardens Children's Centre***

A proportion of the Children's Centre budget is currently spent on renting the top floor of Bidston St James Children's Centre. Moving the staff and stopping paying the rent in the St James Centre building will make savings while allowing the service to continue from the Brassey Gardens site, which is nearby.

***Release of the Children's Centre Satellite bases at schools***

The transfer of these facilities would result in a saving in operating costs. The Council will retain the option to continue to provide services through room rentals.

***Cease the current counselling service available at Children's Centres, and the counselling service for domestic violence provided at the Zero Centre.***

Early identification and prevention work with vulnerable families may be reduced and referrals to specialist services, such as mental health and debt counsellors may increase, resulting in an impact on voluntary sector partners.

***Outsource day care provision across a number of Children's Centres***

The private and voluntary sectors have expressed an interest in taking over provision at these centres. This would result in a budget saving for the Council and a new enterprise for the voluntary sector. Day care provision at these locations will continue to be available. Close monitoring of the service will be put in place to ensure the quality and affordability of the service does not reduce.

**Sure Start - £1,076,000**

The Sure Start Service contributes to a range of different services and projects and helps families to find suitable services to meet their needs.

***The options relating to Sure Start are to reduce the budget of the service through reconfiguring the Family Information Service, stopping funding of the Play Council and Toy Library, removing a contribution to schools for early years foundation stage training, removing a contract with the National Childminding Association, reducing the number of consultants for foundation stage work, reducing the number of child care development workers and reducing funding for special educational needs practice grants.***

This will impact in a number of ways, including opportunities for children with complex special needs being less available and less support for child minders, breakfast clubs and after school clubs.

It will also mean a reduction in the quality of summer play schemes. Information about the services available for people to access will be provided through electronic kiosks within children centres and a redeveloped website.

Removing funding from the Play Council and Toy Library would not necessarily mean that the provision could not continue.

**RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

The Statutory Duties within the Childcare Act 2006 states that the local authority should:

- Make arrangements for integrated working; work with health and employment services (Section 3 & 4);
- Secure sufficient Children's Centres to meet local need (Section 5a);
- Consider whether early childhood services should be delivered through Children's Centres;
- Ensure there are sufficient childcare places;
- Provide pre registration training for childminders.



Proposals for spending reductions are based around the following principles for change:

- Protecting front line delivery for children and families;
- Refocusing provision into the areas of greatest need;
- Allowing children's centres to generate income by charging for universal services in some areas of the borough;
- Removing layers of management;
- Protecting provision by transferring the risk and responsibility to other providers such as schools, the voluntary sector etc.

DFE benchmarking data for 2012/13 indicates that this is an area where spend is above average compared to statistical neighbours - £106 per head, compared to an average of £89.

The percentage of children registered in the 30% most deprived wards is 84.98% which is higher than the national average. The percentage of children registered in the 70% most deprived wards is 74.4%.

The percentage of pupils attaining at least 78 points in the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 points in PSE and CLL is 61% the highest percentage ever achieved. Improvement since 2009 is in line with the other North West local authorities and better than 3 of our neighbouring authorities.

For attainment of children in receipt of free school meals Wirral is top of the North West table with the narrowest gap.

As a result of the health promoting activities within the children centres Wirral has the lowest obesity rates in the North West.

As a result of support for parents with safety in the home hospital emergency admission rates have decreased year on year for the last 3 years.

## **IMPACT**

Six children's centre satellite buildings could potentially be taken over by schools or closed.

There will be no provision for children under 5 years of age who have English as an additional language so language development could be affected. Families where English is an additional language, may not be able to access services at children centres due to the language barrier being problematic.

There is the potential that the reduction in support for Private Voluntary and Independent settings could result in provision being compromised resulting in children not accessing quality provision.

Removing the Children Centre satellites from LA control could result in families not being able to access services in the locality (pram pushing distance).

Lack of support for breakfast and after school clubs could result in a decline in the quality and quantity of provision

The majority of posts to go under the restructure are currently held by women.

As a result of implementing the proposed budget savings staffing would be reduced by:

- 2 bilingual workers
- 6 (FTE) Foundation Stage Consultants
- 6 (FTE) Childcare workers
- 2 (FTE) administrative workers
- 1 (FTE) caretaker
- 4 (FTE) children centre managers
- 1 (FTE) senior manager either quality assurance manager or children centre team leader
- 0.5 (FTE) Principal Manager
- TUPE of 81 childcare staff

If, when the day care is tendered no schools or private sector providers come forward to take over the provision, a decision may need to be taken to close.

Ceasing to commission some services will impact on the voluntary sector though there may be opportunities for a different range of services to be commissioned.

Where no private providers come forward to take over childcare in wards where there is no other provision (Rockferry) there will need to be discussion around whether to close the provision.

Some childcare settings may not be as popular for private providers to take over. This may be the case in areas such as Birkenhead and Rockferry.

Maintaining the quality of childcare provision across the borough will be more problematic when there are less Foundation Stage Consultants to support this process resulting in poorer outcomes in Ofsted inspections.

Maintaining the delivery and quality of the core offer for children's centres which could result in lower Ofsted judgements.

Schools may not want to take on the responsibility of the children's centre satellite buildings so resulting in closure.

## **MITIGATION**

Consultation will be required with Governing Bodies (Leasowe, Ganney's Meadow and the schools who have satellites on their sites); the local community; parents; childcare providers and staff.

The Local Authority has a required to undertake a childcare sufficiency audit to ensure there are enough places available for parents. There is currently a mixed economy where childcare in children's centres is provided by external providers and staff employed directly

by the local authority. Schools and the private sector could take over the childcare offer currently provided the local authority.

Ceasing to provide specialist services such as Bookstart, Bi-lingual support and domestic violence counselling may provide an opportunity for the private and voluntary sector to apply for funding to provide these services.

This might give schools that have satellites the option to take over the buildings with the proviso that outreach services from the children centres can book designated times to deliver services.

As a result of the restructure of the Family Support Worker provision and the proposed move to 4 localities with a single gateway in each locality there is the potential for further savings on staffing of children centre manager posts, 0.5 principal manager post and a further senior post.

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**OPTION: CAREERS EDUCATION INFORMATION ADVICE AND GUIDANCE SERVICE**

**BUDGET SAVING: £1,000,000**

### **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

The Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) service has a budget of £2,760,700.

The Council provides a wide range of careers advice to young people across the borough, including 1:1 information and advice to vulnerable and NEET (not in employment, education or training) young people, providing an alternative web portal offering information on career choices and providing tailored training programmes.

The services are mainly provided through the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership although some support for vulnerable and NEET young people are provided in house.

***The option in this area would be to redesign and reduce these services, ensuring that targeted work still took place at the level defined by the Council's statutory duties.***

A reduction totalling £1,000,000 to the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP) contract for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is proposed of which £500,000 has been already achieved in 2012/13.

The service is currently commissioned in partnership with five other Liverpool City Region (LCR) local authorities - Halton (lead), Liverpool, St Helen's, Knowsley and Sefton. The current contract with The Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP) is due to conclude 31 March 2014.

The contract with GMCP includes the delivery of two strands of activity, an information, advice and guidance service for young people vulnerable to becoming NEET and a young people's tracking service.

### **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

The responsibility for the delivery of CEIAG changed with the passage of the Education Act 2011 with schools, colleges and providers becoming responsible for the delivery of CEIAG to their learners. DfE has issued guidance that "local authorities will retain their statutory duty to encourage, enable or assist young people's participation in education or training".

As there is no longer an expectation that local authorities will provide a universal careers service with schools, the Council has sought to achieve budget reductions whilst at the same time remodelling a targeted CEIAG service to enable the local authority to deliver its statutory duties. Other options have not been considered as the existing contract with GMCP is in its penultimate year and already makes provision for budget reductions.

CEIAG services are part of services to young people. DFE benchmarking data indicates that overall this is an area where costs are high compared to statistical neighbours £101 per head compared to an average of £76.

## **IMPACT**

A reduction in service has the potential to impact on all wards.

The risk to staff lies with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership.

Year on year contract reductions of this level have the potential to impact upon the Liverpool City Region contract if GMCP gives notice on the contract. However it is worth noting that all other LCR authorities are seeking financial reductions of varying degrees.

If GMCP give notice on the contract then there is a risk that there will not be time to enter into another procurement round to secure the service.

There is no direct impact on the VCFS. It should be noted that GMCP is a registered charity and a reduction in contract value may impact on their wider business.

## **MITIGATION**

Remodelling a targeted CEIAG service would enable the local authority to deliver its statutory duties

**OPTION: SHORT BREAKS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

**BUDGET SAVING: £300,000**

### **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

The Council provides funding for children with disabilities to go on short breaks, which provide respite both for the children but also their carers and/or families.

The Short Breaks Service (Aiming High) introduced in 2009 has provided social workers (both within the District Teams and Children with Disabilities Team) with a broader menu of options to offer families. These commissioned providers manage the referral and access processes independently in many cases which reduces the level of involvement required from the social worker

***The option would be to reduce the number and range of short breaks which are funded for children with disabilities.***

The Short Breaks Service currently has a budget of £1,463,000. The proposed savings would be £150,000 in 2013/14 and a further £150,000 the year later.

### **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

These short breaks are seen to provide 'good value for money' as providers spread their resources well, often exceeding outputs required and offer additional services to families. With some of the more difficult to reach families they will engage with external agencies better than they will with the local authority and this has enabled us to gather better learning on the needs of this population. However, the reductions proposed are not out of line with decisions taken by neighbouring local authorities and DFE benchmarking data indicates that Wirral's spend is high compared to statistical neighbours, with a spend per child aged 0-17 of £39 compared to an average of £17.

### **IMPACT**

Since the service started in 2009 there has been a significant increase in the number of children with disabilities accessing short breaks and also in the hours of delivery. As families have been in receipt of these services for some time a reduction may impact their family functioning.

Children and young people with disabilities would not have the same choice or access to the service they get at the moment. It is also expected there would potentially be more pressure put on Council services as parents will request alternative support.

The proposed savings would also mean that less money would be invested with the voluntary sector. For some of these specialist providers this may effect their functioning long term.

The service is Wirral wide so this would not affect any particular wards..

The project team will be unchanged (post of Project Manager, 2 x Inclusion Development Officers and a team Support Officer).

## **MITIGATION**

The commissioning process for 2013/14 has begun, and savings would be taken into account when it is decided what services to buy. Service specifications already allow for them to be delivered more effectively or for units of delivery to be reduced. Parent/carers and existing providers were consulted regarding service design for this commissioning process. They were not informed directly of the need to reduce costs.

The proposed reductions would be informed by data from the current commissioned services to maintain required services where possible and manage/limit any disruption.



**OPTION: CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE**

**BUDGET SAVING: £250,000**

### **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

The current CAMHS budget is £835,400.

This is a comprehensive, specialist and bespoke service to children and adolescents who require mental health support. This is in addition to statutory health provision and was set up through the CAMHS specific grant allocated to local authorities to target more vulnerable children.

The service involves additional support being provided to children in need, children in care, children with a plan for adoption and children with a disability. Additionally, CAMHS has direct responsibility for delivering a specialist fostering programme, Fostering Futures, for some of the most vulnerable children in care.

***This option would be to reduce the service by a third.***

### **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

The service has developed incrementally over a number of years in partnership with Health Services. There is opportunity to jointly restructure the service to meet the needs of the most vulnerable children.

### **IMPACT**

There is a risk that some of the more vulnerable children, young people and families will not receive timely, therapeutic intervention to respond to their needs.

There are implications for staff in this service who are employed by Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Trust on fixed term contracts. These posts are funded by the local authority.

There is no direct impact upon the voluntary, community and faith sector. Children receiving these services live in all wards in Wirral.

### **MITIGATION**

The risk that some of the more vulnerable children, young people and families would not receive responsive support would be mitigated by careful redesign of the service, providing a proportionate approach to respond to children and families needs. These changes would take place in tandem with the Local Authorities review of preventative services.

Re-profiling would be undertaken in partnership with Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Trust and NHS commissioners / Clinical Commissioning Group in Wirral, to provide a service which is targeted in an effective way with reduced resources.

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