



Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Thursday, 14 February 2013

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

Contact Officer: Lyndzay Roberts

Tel: 0151 691 8262

e-mail: lyndzayroberts@wirral.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk>

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. CONSULTATION FINDINGS : WHAT REALLY MATTERS STAGE 2 (Pages 1 - 64)

The report of the Chief Executive in relation to the What Really Matters Stage 2 Consultation, to be considered by the Cabinet on 7 February 2012, is attached.

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

3. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

FEBRUARY 7TH 2013

SUBJECT:	CONSULTATION FINDINGS: WHAT REALLY MATTERS STAGE 2
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
KEY DECISION:	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Cabinet on July 10th 2012 instructed officers to implement a comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement in order to inform the development of the Council's Corporate and Financial Plan for 2013-2016 and further to inform the decision making process surrounding significant budget savings.
- 1.2 Cabinet received the feedback on the first stage of the consultation on November 8th 2012 and resolved to instruct officers to publish a series of budget options and to further consult on those options.
- 1.3 This report presents the feedback on those budget options from Wirral residents, staff and other stakeholders.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 What Really Matters is the largest consultation exercise ever undertaken by Wirral Council, both in terms of reach and scope. This project was designed to engage the residents, workforce and stakeholders of Wirral Council in the development of a 3-year Corporate Plan and Financial Plan, as well as helping the Council to develop options for savings of £109 million over a three year period. The project works to one overall objective:

“To devise and implement a comprehensive, flexible and genuine consultation process; ensuring that options are developed in an open, transparent and robust manner and that every community, business and stakeholder in our borough has the opportunity to contribute.”
- 2.2 The What Really Matters project has been a two-stage consultation process; engaging the community firstly in debating the principles the Council should explore to develop the budget options and then further debate around those options.
- 2.3 This approach has ensured that the Council has sought public involvement and participation at every stage of the budget setting process – both in the development of options and providing further feedback on those options, as well as providing the opportunity to make further suggestions about Council plans, priorities and savings.
- 2.4 Stage one of the project launched on September 10th 2012 and closed on October 19th 2012. The results of this process were reported to Cabinet on November 8th 2012, and

a series of detailed budget options were published by the Chief Executive on November 9th 2012 in advance of a further programme of consultation (stage 2).

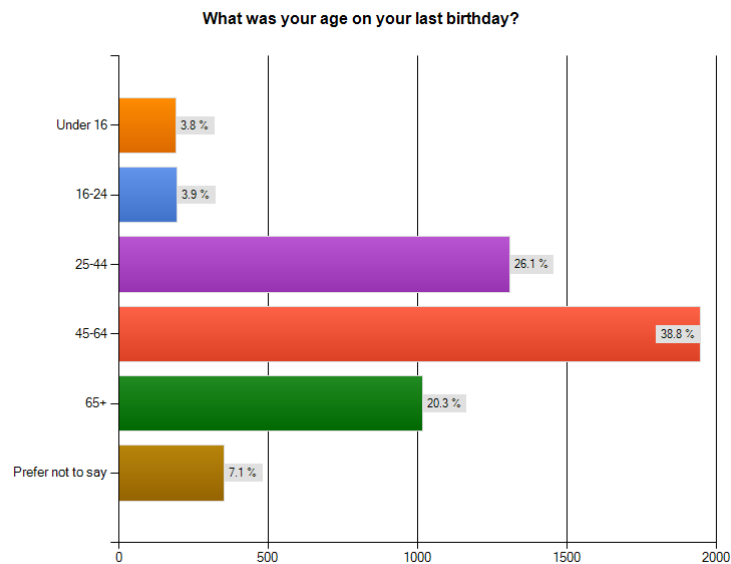
3.0 CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Budget options were grouped within three themes: Transformation and Resources, Regeneration and Environment, and Families and Wellbeing. Residents, staff and stakeholders were provided with a range of information detailing the background, level of savings, potential impact and methods of mitigating any potential negative impact for each individual option. This information included:
- Questionnaire: Split into three sections, the questionnaire provided a one paragraph summary of each option and provided the opportunity for respondents to select one of three choices indicating their opinion on the option.
 - Summary Paper: Three summary papers (one per 'theme') were produced and were available online, at Council buildings and at consultation events. These papers provided a summary of each option, including the level of savings involved and some background information.
 - Option Paper: For each of the published options, a detailed option paper was available. This paper provided information regarding the background to the option, the potential impact if the option was implemented, proposed methods to mitigate that impact and also the potential savings associated with the option.
- 3.2 The questionnaire was the primary research tool used in this consultation, and as such it was essential that the document was designed in a way to ensure robust, clear and actionable results. It was also vital to the success of the project to ensure that the questionnaire was produced in a fashion that was accessible, clear and neutral. To ensure that this was the case, Council officers took a number of steps to ensure the questionnaire was externally validated as an effective research and consultation tool.
- 3.3 A draft version of the questionnaire was analysed by an external agency through the Market Research Society. The final draft of the questionnaire was also presented to the members of the Children in Care Council and a group of people with learning disabilities at a Council Day Centre who made further suggestions as to the design and wording of the document.
- 3.4 Further work was also done to ensure accessibility including publishing an interactive Easy Read version, and developing three individual videos, which were used at consultation events, on the Council website and also played through the network of 30 LCD screens in One Stop Shops and Libraries. These videos were designed to more fully explain the context of the options and also provide guidance for how to complete the questionnaire document.
- 3.5 There were a number of different routes available for residents, staff and other stakeholders to provide their views on the budget options. The primary route for residents was through the questionnaire, which could be completed online or on paper format, but residents also regularly sent letters and emails directly to the Chief Executive or through the consultation mechanism. A number of petitions were also received relating directly to both the process in general and specific budget options.

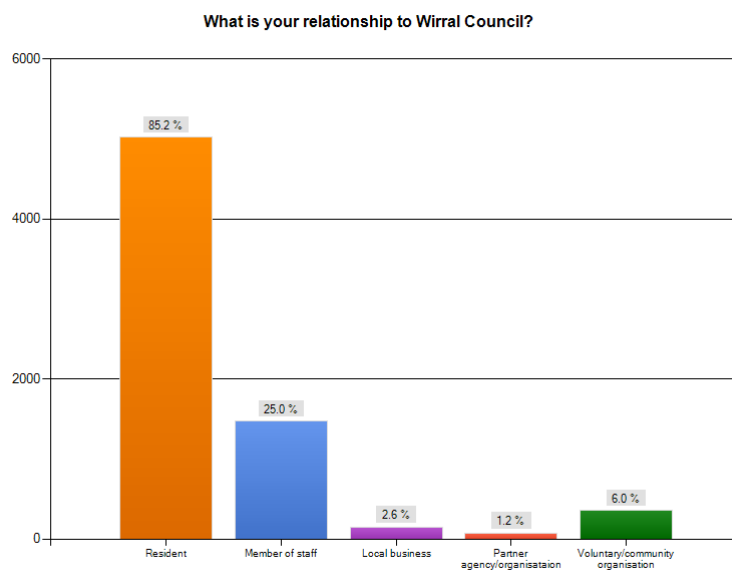
- 3.6 An extensive programme of staff consultation was also delivered, including manager briefings, consultation events, written communications from the Chief Executive and consultation with Trade Union representatives. Further detailed workshops were also held with Members of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.7 For people using services which may potentially be affected as a result of the budget options, there was further detailed consultation held. The mechanism employed and feedback received as part of this consultation is provided in the appendices to this report alongside the appropriate option.
- 3.8 The first stage of the consultation process involved a programme of 150 events, and resulted in the Council receiving almost 7000 responses. The second stage of the consultation process involved a further 100 community events, extensive online promotion and engagement, and a programme of targeted consultation with potentially affected groups of staff and people who use services. This second stage of consultation received 6522 responses as of January 31st 2013.

4.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 4.1 An extensive communications and engagement plan was implemented to ensure this consultation reached the widest possible audience. All promotional and engagement activity was completed via existing Council staff and resources.
- 4.2 Over 100 events were held at many locations throughout the borough, including supermarkets, community centres and libraries. The programme of direct engagement events was published on the Council website and constantly updated, as well as being circulated to the local and regional media.
- 4.3 Online communications were also utilised widely to help promote the consultation, with emails being sent to over 13,000 Wirral residents and extensive promotion of the consultation on the Council website, via social media, as well as partner and community owned websites. Regular communications were also provided via local and regional media throughout the consultation period.
- 4.4 Promotional and engagement activity was evenly spread across the borough, with additional events taking place in main shopping areas. This work contributed to a level of response which is representative of the borough on a geographical basis. In terms of parliamentary constituencies, West Wirral is slightly over represented in the response, Wallasey slightly under represented, with Birkenhead and South Wirral represented almost exactly.
- 4.5 A wide range of age groups were also encouraged to take part in the consultation, with specific activity taking place within schools, youth centres, cinemas, bingo halls and through events with partners such as the Older People's Parliament. The chart below demonstrates the age breakdown of the respondents to the consultation.



- 4.6 The consultation further asked respondents to identify their relationship to Wirral Council, and the table below demonstrates how respondents answered this question. 787 people stated that they were both residents and members of staff.



- 4.7 Further detailed information related to the demographic and geographic profile of the consultation response sample is available in Appendix 4 of this report.
- 4.8 A detailed programme of consultation and engagement was also delivered with our partners in schools, to discuss the potential impact and planned mitigation of the budget options in relation to schools.
- 4.9 This programme consisted of meetings with all Secondary head teachers, all Primary head teachers and all Special head teachers during November 2012. Further meetings were held with the School Forum in November 2012 and the School Governors' Forum in January 2013. The Wirral Children's Trust also met to discuss and provide their views on the budget option.

- 4.10 At these meetings all budget options with an impact on schools were discussed, and head teachers were able to provide their views on the option and also make other suggestions. The feedback from all of these meetings has been considered as part of this consultation process.

5.0 STAFF CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Staff were able to take part in the consultation on budget options in the same way as residents and other stakeholders; through the public questionnaire, emails to the Chief Executive and, if they so wished, attending consultation events.
- 5.2 Throughout the consultation period, all staff who are deemed 'at risk' as a result of the budget options have attended briefings with their Chief Officers or Head of Service. At these briefings employees were able to provide feedback and were encouraged to provide additional suggestions for how the Council could make alternative savings.
- 5.3 The Chief Executive has received and personally replied to in excess of 400 emails and letters, the majority of which came from staff as a response to the Chief Executive's weekly communications. Many of these letters and emails contained suggestions for additional savings and also queries from staff and residents as to the potential impact of individual budget options.
- 5.4 Suggestions and comments received through these routes were generally similar, and mainly focussed on terms and conditions of employment. Many of these comments focussed on the issue of unpaid leave, as presented as part of the 'Conditions of Service' budget option. Staff expressed a number of different preferences for the way the unpaid leave is taken, with a number of staff stating that they would prefer the leave to be taken over the Christmas period.
- 5.5 Further suggestions were also made in relation to the proposals around Essential Car User Allowance, with some staff suggesting that it should be removed altogether and some others believing it should be reduced in a targeted fashion. A number of employees, particularly based in Children's Social Care teams, believe that the Essential Car User Allowance is vital for them to be able to do their jobs. More suggestions were made in relation to terms and conditions which focussed on reductions in annual leave, enhancements, sickness entitlements and salary caps and reductions, as an alternative to potential compulsory redundancies.
- 5.6 Many suggestions were also made by staff which focussed on increasing the Council's income. These suggestions focussed on our use of buildings and the potential for sale in some instances and reduced energy and utility costs in others, and also frequently mentioned the potential for certain Council functions to offer their services to the public, private and community sectors to generate income. A number of staff also suggested that the Council should look to generate income through advertising on its website, network of buildings and land.

6.0 TRADE UNION CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Formal consultation with the Trade Unions in relation to the statutory consultation under Section 188 (4) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act

1992 on the impact of the Officer Budget Options opened on 12 November 2012. The statutory 90 days consultation period commenced from this date.

- 6.2 In addition, on 12 November 2012 the Chief Executive opened consultation on a range of proposals which impact on staff terms and conditions, and changes to a number of Council policies including the Council's Discretionary Severance Scheme. This included proposals for unpaid leave, enhancements and car allowances and a number of policy changes including allowances for disturbance, relocation and telephone and the Council's severance scheme.
- 6.3 Since 12 November 2012 over 20 meetings have been held with the Trade Unions to discuss Council's budget position and impact of Officer Budget options. During these meetings the proposed changes to Terms and Conditions and Severance were also discussed.
- 6.4 Eight meetings have taken place specifically to discuss and analyse the impact of the proposals for terms and conditions and proposed policy changes. It was agreed that consultation in relation to Terms and Conditions would be extended beyond 20 December 2012 to allow further discussions to continue.
- 6.4 The Trade Unions have raised concerns about the consultation period in relation to the proposed Officer budget options. They have also made it clear that they would not support compulsory redundancies and are seeking an attractive severance scheme to encourage volunteers.
- 6.5 In relation to Terms and Conditions the Trade Unions have raised concerns about the cumulative financial impact of the proposals on employees. They have raised concerns about the equity of the proposals for removal of enhancements for weekend working and the potential impact on services of the removal of car user allowances. The Trade Unions have made it clear that they want to protect contractual pay.

7.0 CONSULTATION WITH THE VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH SECTOR

- 7.1 A number of budget options detailed in the appendices of this report make specific reference to voluntary, community and faith sector organisations, and their ability to carry out work and perform services on behalf of the Council and other partners.
- 7.2 Detailed consultation and discussions with those organisations has been in progress within this context throughout the full consultation period, and a workshop including a number of key voluntary organisations took place during phase one of the consultation, and the outcome was reported to Cabinet in November 2012.
- 7.3 Following this work, a working group has been established consisting of Council officers and representatives from the sector, which is meeting weekly to discuss and agree partnership approaches to ensure that the sector and the Council is able to deliver on those budget options where the VCF sector is suggested as a potential alternative supplier.
- 7.4 This work will continue beyond the budget setting process, and will aim to ensure true and effective commissioning and partnership working between the Council, the public sector and the voluntary, community and faith sector.

8.0 PETITIONS RECEIVED

- 8.1 A number of petitions were received during the consultation period, related to both specific budget options and the process of making savings as a whole. These petitions have been included in the consultation findings. The table below describes a list of petitions received in opposition to the budget options.

Petition	Signatures
Neighbourhood Funding Freeze (e-petition)	16
Stop the Garden tax (e-petition)	122
Wirral Council Cuts	6680
Council Kennels	7644
Wirral Council Cuts (e-petition)	184
Crown Bowling Greens (e-petition)	79
Save Moreton Youth Centre (e-petition)	45
Save Moreton Youth Centre	559
Bebington / New Ferry Youth Club	139
Coronation Park, Greasby	118
Heswall Bowling Green	690
Junior Crown Green Bowlers	174
Save Belvedere Youth Club	384

- 8.2 The petitions 'Neighbourhood Funding Freeze' and 'Stop the Garden' tax were responded to in October and December 2012 and have formed part of this consultation process. The two petitions, 'Wirral Council Cuts' (6680 signatures) and 'Council Kennels' (7644 signatures) were considered by Council on 17th December, 2012, in accordance with the Council's petition scheme (minute 75 refers) at which the spokespersons for the two petitions addressed the Council and it was agreed that the petitions be noted and comments of the spokespersons be considered as part of the ongoing consultation process on the budget options.
- 8.3 The Chief Executive also received a number of letters from organisations such as Bowling Clubs, Friends of the Park organisations and other user groups. These communications are reported within the appendices of this report alongside the appropriate option.
- 8.4 Among other letters, the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council also received a letter from the Agencies for Carers Executive (ACE) which provided results from a piece of research they had conducted with a number of voluntary and community organisations in relation to the budget options. These results demonstrated the options which were most important to those organisations represented, which have been considered as part of this consultation process.
- 8.5 A further letter was received from Wirral MENCAP, which provided views on a range of options contained within the Families and Wellbeing strategic theme. This feedback came from two events held by the organisation in December 2012, and provided a range of suggestions and concerns which have been considered as part of this consultation process.

- 8.6 Minutes from a meeting of Wirral's Children's Trust, which was convened to discuss the budget options, were also received and formed part of this consultation process.

9.0 SPECIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- 9.1 A further programme of meetings was held with Members of the Council's five Overview and Scrutiny Committees following the publication of the Chief Executive's Budget Options, following further workshops held in September and November 2012.
- 9.2 At these meetings, Committee Members were provided with detailed information relating to each budget option within their portfolio, and were able to ask questions of Council officers as well as invite opinion and expertise from external partners.
- 9.3 Members made a number of suggestions at this series of meetings, minutes of which were reported to Cabinet on 20 December 2012.

10.0 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

- 10.1 The Council used online software to capture all responses and provide analysis of the quantitative aspect of the consultation questions. Responses which are completed online go directly into the system, and any hand written responses are manually inputted into the same system, using clear protocols. A small team of officers was put in place to input all of the responses from the paper questionnaire into the database. This enables the project team to review the results on a regular basis and present the findings to Executive Team to consider response levels and findings.
- 10.2 All valid responses to individual questions were analysed regardless of whether questionnaires were partially or fully completed.
- 10.3 Responses were continually analysed to ensure they were coming from a sample that was representative of the make up of the Wirral population as a whole. This information provided guidance on the development and targeting of events and other promotional and engagement activity throughout the consultation period.
- 10.4 Analysis was undertaken for each question, and these reports can be found at Appendices 1-3. Individual questions were presented as quantitative data, illustrated as percentages of respondents who have selected one of the following statements:
- I support this under the circumstances
 - I accept this if it is absolutely necessary
 - I find this completely unacceptable

A small number of options provided a different method of indicating a preference, which is again detailed in Appendices 1-3.

- 10.5 Responses are provided under each thematic area (Transformation and Resources, Regeneration and Environment, and Families and Wellbeing) with a detailed analysis of responses prepared for each question.
- 10.6 Information provided in the form of free text comments through the questionnaire was reviewed and analysed by the project team to identify common themes and

suggestions. A summary of these comments is included within the analysis reports alongside the quantitative data. All comments received through the questionnaire are available online at the Council website at www.wirral.gov.uk/whatreallymatters.

- 10.7 The questionnaires include a section to capture demographic and personal information about each respondent. These responses were analysed on an ongoing basis to monitor appropriate demographic representation against Wirral baselines. A full analysis of this data is provided at Appendix 4 of this report.

11.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 11.1 A project team was established and met weekly to develop and deliver a project plan, with robust risk assessment arrangements. The key risk for this project is that failure to deliver a successful consultation project will leave the Council unable to develop a corporate or financial plan and make the budget savings required in 2013/14.

12.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 12.1 This project was developed and delivered in response to the independent review of Corporate Governance arrangements, the priorities for improvement adopted by the Wirral Improvement Board and the Council decisions in relation to ensuring that lawful engagement and consultation are central to all Council budget and decision making processes. Therefore no further options have been considered.

13.0 CONSULTATION

- 13.1 The Council has agreed with the voluntary, community and faith sector to define and strengthen relationships between these sectors for the benefit of all Wirral communities. There is a commitment to extensive consultation with local communities. The legal responsibilities regarding consultation and engagement are set out below.

14.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 14.1 A number of budget options contained within the appendices to this report detail increased partnership working with the VCF sector. Consultation completed to date with these organisations is outlined in section 7.0 of this report. This work will continue to ensure that, where applicable, the sector is fully engaged and able to provide those services where a commissioning need may arise.

15.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 15.1 Existing staffing resources were used to develop and deliver this project, primarily through the Communications and Engagement division and Policy Unit, but with support and guidance from all departments.

16.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1 Recent case law has made it clear that any consultation undertaken must be meaningful, informed and reasonable. Failure to ensure this could lead to legal challenge and any decision taken which takes into account the consultation could be undermined and open to challenge by way of Judicial Review. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 came into force in April 2009 and introduced a duty for local authorities to involve, inform and consult with their communities. The duty is wide-ranging and applies to the delivery of services, policy

and decision making and means the Council must consult relevant individuals, groups, businesses, organisations and other stakeholders that the Authority considers likely to be affected by, or have an interest in, their actions and functions.

17.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

17.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

Yes and impact review is attached –

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/chief-executives>

18.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

18.1 A number of potential budget options, including the changed use of buildings across the borough, could bring benefits in terms of carbon reductions.

19.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

19.1 Potential community safety implications based on budget options.

20.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

20.1 That Cabinet notes the consultation process and implementation described within this report, and thanks Wirral residents, staff and other stakeholders for their input.

20.2 That Cabinet notes the detailed consultation findings in relation to each budget option as contained within Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

21.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

21.1 The recommendations respond to the agreed objective for this project, which was:

“To devise and implement a comprehensive, flexible and genuine consultation process; ensuring that options are developed in an open, transparent and robust manner and that every community, business and stakeholder in our borough has the opportunity to contribute.”

REPORT AUTHOR: **Emma Degg**
Head of Neighbourhoods and Engagement
Telephone: (0151) 691 8688
Email: engage@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Budget Options Feedback: Transformation and Resources
- Appendix 2: Budget Options Feedback: Regeneration and Environment
- Appendix 3: Budget Options Feedback: Families and Wellbeing
- Appendix 4: Geographic and Demographic Summary of Response

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
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Cabinet	8th November 2012
Cabinet	10th July 2012
Cabinet	21st June 2012

Equality Impact Toolkit (new version February 2012)

Section 1: Your details

Council officer: Kevin MacCallum

Email address: kevinmaccallum@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Service: Head of Neighbourhoods and Engagement

Chief Officer: Chief Executive

Department: Neighbourhoods and Engagement

Date: January 2013

Section 2: What Council function / proposal is being assessed?

Council Budget Consultation 2012: What Really Matters?

Section 2b: Is this EIA being submitted to Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes Cabinet February 7th.

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/chief-executives>

Section 3: Will the Council function / proposal affect equality in? (please tick relevant boxes)

- X **Services**
- X **The workforce**
- X **Communities**
- ☐ **Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

Section 4: Within the Equality Duty 2010, there are 3 legal requirements. Will the Council function / proposal support the way the Council(please tick relevant boxes)

- ☐ Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ☐ Advances equality of opportunity
- X Fosters good relations between groups of people

Section 5:

Will the function / proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any negative impact.

Protected characteristic	Positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
All	Negative – potential for some communities and groups to be not as involved as others in influencing Council budgets and services.	Specific targeted work will take place to ensure all communities are encouraged to take part	Kevin MacCallum	November 2012 and ongoing	Staff time
All	Negative – potential changes and/or reductions in service could impact on communities and groups	Specific targeted consultation will take place across all affected groups	Kevin MacCallum	November 2012 and ongoing	Staff time

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Section 5a: Where and how will the above actions be monitored?

A dedicated project team is in place to ensure the effective delivery of the consultation process. Weekly project team meetings provide the opportunity for regular review of the equalities considerations at each critical stage of the project through initiation, project planning, document production, the consultation phase itself and the analysis, findings and reporting back stages.

Section 6: What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?

The Council has drawn upon its extensive networks of contacts and partners to promote the consultation process with a specific emphasis on voluntary, community and faith sector groups and organisations.

Section 7: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council function / policy?

Yes

Section 8: How will consultation take place?

A comprehensive consultation engagement strategy was planned and delivered, comprising over 100 events across the borough together with a wide range of targeted activity with groups.

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BUDGET OPTIONS FEEDBACK: TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES

1.0 SUMMARY

The majority of options contained within this theme related to 'back office' processes and services. The options are presented in this report, together with the quantitative data gathered through the consultation questionnaire, and a summary of any related comments received through the consultation process.

Options such as Council Tax, Libraries, One Stop Shops and Revenues and Benefits were included as part of Families and Wellbeing in the public consultation, but are presented within Transformation and Resources within this report.

2.0 BUDGET OPTIONS

2.1 REDUCING COUNCIL MANAGEMENT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Wirral Council has around 4,800 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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	53.1%	2711
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	37.5%	1911
I find this completely unacceptable	9.4%	480

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Concern was shown regarding the potential impact of redundancies, both on service delivery and the Wirral economy. A strong view among these comments was that job losses and redundancies should be targeted at those earning higher salaries in the first instance to reduce 'top heavy' management.

It was also mentioned a number of times that redundancies and restructures should be completed logically, and through 'precision cuts', rather than blanket top slicing across the organisation. The majority of the comments concerning this option received through the questionnaire came from Council employees.

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

APPENDIX ONE

As detailed in the substantive report, a comprehensive programme of staff consultation has taken place around this option and budget options with staff implications.

This consultation has consisted of communications and meetings with the Chief Executive, a full programme of briefings for affected employees and a series of meetings with Trade Union organisations.

OPTION SUMMARY

The first stage of this option was considered and recommended by Cabinet on December 20th 2012. The results of the final consultation demonstrate clear support for this option, with only 9.4% of all respondents stating that they find this option completely unacceptable. When the views of Council employees are taken into account separately, this figure rises somewhat, but the general theme of approval is consistent across both residents and Council employees.

2.2 WORKFORCE CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	39.8%	2033
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	34.2%	1744
I find this completely unacceptable	26.0%	1329

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Essential car user allowance was the main item that was mentioned in this area, with many people commenting that some staff would find it difficult to do their jobs without it, particularly within Children's Social Care.

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

As detailed in the substantive report, a comprehensive programme of consultation and engagement has taken place around this option with staff and through Trade Union bodies. Meetings with Trade Unions have highlighted concerns around staff losing contractual pay.

OPTION SUMMARY

APPENDIX ONE

The results of this option show broad approval from people responding to the questionnaire. Some concerns were raised through comments, which are described above.

2.3 PROCUREMENT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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 the work it does and also through paying some invoices and bills through an online system.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	53.7%	2706
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	32.0%	1615
I find this completely unacceptable	14.3%	719

OPTION SUMMARY

This option was considered and recommended by Cabinet in December 2012. The results of the final consultation show strong support for this option, with almost 55% of respondents stating they support, and over 30% stating that they 'accept' its implementation.

2.4 TREASURY MANAGEMENT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	77.0%	3909
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	19.6%	993
I find this completely unacceptable	3.5%	177

OPTION SUMMARY

This option was considered and recommended by Cabinet in December 2012. The results of the final consultation show strong support for this option, with over 75% of respondents stating they support, and almost 20% stating that they 'accept' its implementation.

2.5 RATIONALISATION OF CIVIC SERVICES

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	81.8%	4151
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	14.5%	736
I find this completely unacceptable	3.7%	190

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of the final consultation show support for this option, with over 80% of respondents stating they support its implementation.

2.6 MOVING TO FOUR YEAR ELECTIONS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	72.9%	3680
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	17.6%	890
I find this completely unacceptable	9.4%	476

OPTION SUMMARY

This option was considered and recommended by Cabinet in December 2012. The results of the final consultation show strong support for this option, with almost 75% of respondents stating they support its implementation.

2.7 REDUCING THE COST OF DEMOCRACY

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Council currently operates a model of governance known as Strong Leader, which involves a Cabinet and five Overview and

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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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	69.5%	3494
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	23.2%	1167
I find this completely unacceptable	7.2%	363

OPTION SUMMARY

This option was considered and recommended by Cabinet in December 2012. The results of the final consultation show strong support for this option, with 70% of respondents stating they support its implementation.

2.8 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	49.3%	2476
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	33.0%	1655
I find this completely unacceptable	17.7%	890

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

The comments related to IT, primarily from Council employees, were concerned that further reductions in this area could impact on efficiency across the board.

OPTION SUMMARY

This option was considered and recommended by Cabinet in December 2012. The results of the final consultation show strong support for this option, with almost 50% of respondents stating they support, and over 30% stating that they accept its implementation.

2.9 PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Council's communications and engagement division, which 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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	51.8%	2603
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	29.4%	1475
I find this completely unacceptable	18.8%	945

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

The majority of comments in this area supported stopping the sponsorship arrangements with Tranmere Rovers FC, with a small number of people believing that it should be maintained as a driver to increase tourism visits to the borough. Further, while broadly supportive of the reduction in marketing spend; a number of people questioned removing the supported events budget in terms of tourism.

OPTION SUMMARY

Some concerns were raised about removing subsidies for tourism events, but there is still strong support shown for this option.

2.10 AREA FORUM FUNDING

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	46.3%	2299

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I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	33.1%	1643
I find this completely unacceptable	20.6%	1020

OPTION SUMMARY

Cabinet released £330,000 of funding to community organisations in December 2012, and also agreed to implement a new method of engaging and working with communities in January 2013, subject to consultation with the Democracy Working Group and approval by Full Council. The final consultation results show strong public support for this option, with just over 20% stating that they oppose its implementation.

2.11 BETTER USE OF BUILDINGS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	63.4%	3181
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	28.1%	1409
I find this completely unacceptable	8.5%	424

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

These comments focussed on the idea that the Council needs to make better use of its assets, and to sell or rent any buildings that it does not need. People further suggested that the Council should not rent any buildings, and should only use buildings that it owns.

OPTION SUMMARY

Cabinet considered and recommended this option in December 2012. The final consultation results show strong support for this option, with less than 10% opposing its implementation.

2.12 TRANSFORMING BUSINESS SUPPORT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

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Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	65.6%	3266
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	26.9%	1338
I find this completely unacceptable	7.5%	375

OPTION SUMMARY

This option was considered and recommended by Cabinet in December 2012. The final consultation results show strong support for this option, with less than 10% opposing its implementation.

2.13 RESTRUCTURE OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	53.4%	2643
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	31.6%	1564
I find this completely unacceptable	15.0%	740

OPTION SUMMARY

The final consultation results show strong support for this option, with over 50% stating they support the option, and 15% opposing its implementation. This option was considered and recommended by Cabinet in December 2012.

2.14 REVENUES AND BENEFITS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the	40.8%	1869

APPENDIX ONE

circumstances		
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	39.9%	1830
I find this completely unacceptable	19.3%	885

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Comments stressed the need to ensure the implications of Welfare Reform are properly considered when deciding where reductions should be made.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results to this question show strong support for reducing the number of staff within the division.

2.15 INCREASING COURT COSTS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	76.2%	3589
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	17.5%	823
I find this completely unacceptable	6.3%	299

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

The majority of comments relating to Council Tax were regarding court costs – people believe that the Council should charge full cost recovery in this area, rather than simply increasing the fee.

OPTION SUMMARY

The comments and results related to this option show overwhelming support for this option, with just 6.3% of respondents stating that they opposed its implementation.

2.16 COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

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Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	54.0%	2525
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	28.3%	1323
I find this completely unacceptable	17.7%	829

OPTION SUMMARY

The consultation results show strong support for this option, with over 50% of respondents stating that they supported and almost 30% stating that they would accept a review of exemptions and discounts.

2.17 COUNCIL TAX PENSIONER DISCOUNT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	22.9%	1086
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	24.4%	1160
I find this completely unacceptable	52.7%	2499

OPTION SUMMARY

A slight majority, 52.7%, of people answering this question would oppose any reduction in the Pensioner Discount for Council Tax.

2.18 COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY RELIEF

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	38.8%	1814
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	37.9%	1774

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I find this completely unacceptable	23.3%	1088
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OPTION SUMMARY

The results to this question show strong support for this option.

2.19 LIBRARIES AND ONE STOP SHOPS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Wirral Council has a network of 13 One Stop Shops (OSS) 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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	26.8%	1274
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	30.1%	1435
I find this completely unacceptable	43.1%	2051

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Opinions were mixed in this area; a number of people believe that there are too many libraries in Wirral and that smaller ones should close. Conversely, many people commented that libraries were vital and that, while merging with OSS and closing between Christmas and New Year was acceptable, reducing the service (and reducing the book fund) was not.

OPTION SUMMARY

Taking the comments into consideration, there is still relative support for this option – with over 25% stating they would support and over 30% stating they would accept its implementation.

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BUDGET OPTIONS FEEDBACK: REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

1.0 SUMMARY

The majority of options contained within this theme related to services provided through the Regeneration, Housing and Planning and Technical Services Departments, including parks and countryside, leisure, car parking, highways and waste collection among others.

The options are presented in this report, together with the quantitative data gathered through the consultation questionnaire, a summary of any related comments received through the consultation process and, where applicable, further consultation which has taken place.

2.0 BUDGET OPTIONS

2.1 CAR PARKING

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	63.5%	3144
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	22.8%	1131
I find this completely unacceptable	13.7%	677

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

There was a mixture of responses in relation to parking. Some people believe that raising charges would have a negative impact on businesses, while others agreed that the same charges should be applied across the borough.

OPTION SUMMARY

Some concerns were raised in the free text comments which related to this option, but overall the consultation is demonstrating strong support for implementing this option.

2.2 GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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Garden waste is currently 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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	26.2%	1308
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	22.1%	1101
I find this completely unacceptable	51.7%	2583

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

A small number of comments agreed with the charge, provided it was optional and not mandatory. However, a number of comments received stated that this option could result in an increase in fly tipping.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of this option show a slight majority, 51.7%, oppose implementing this option. Over 100 respondents left comments related to this option, a summary of which is provided above.

2.3 HOUSEHOLD WASTE COLLECTION

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	43.4%	2161
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	27.4%	1367
I find this completely unacceptable	29.2%	1452

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

This option received similar comments as were received relating to Garden Waste, in that there was a risk that increasing charges could result in an increase in fly tipping.

OPTION SUMMARY

Although a small number of comments raised concerns about this option, the final results of the consultation show relatively strong

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support for its implementation, with almost three quarters of the total response stating that they would either support or accept an increased charge.

2.4 PRE-PLANNING ADVICE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	56.7%	2796
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	30.4%	1497
I find this completely unacceptable	12.9%	635

OPTION SUMMARY

This option was considered and recommended by Cabinet in December 2012. The results of the final consultation show strong support for this option, with over 55% of respondents stating they support, and over 30% stating that they 'accept' its implementation.

2.5 APPRENTICE PROGRAMME

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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, the first to remove the budget for this programme, which would end the Wirral Apprentice Programme in its current form; and the second to reduce the budget to this programme, and explore opportunities to develop a Liverpool City Region Apprentice scheme.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Remove the budget for this programme	12.0%	560
Reduce the budget for the programme and develop a Liverpool City Region scheme	88.0%	4099

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

People commenting here believed that in the current economic climate every effort should be made to maintain or increase investment in employment and training.

OPTION SUMMARY

Final results relating to this option show strong support from respondents to the second option of reducing the budget for the programme, and exploring the development of a Liverpool City Region scheme.

2.6 HANDYPERSON SCHEME

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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 is to redevelop this service, meaning it is targeted more effectively at people who have recently been discharged from hospital, reducing the service available to the general public.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	48.7%	2410
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	31.1%	1541
I find this completely unacceptable	20.2%	999

OPTION SUMMARY

The final results of the consultation show strong support for this option, with just over 20% of respondents stating that they believe it is unacceptable.

2.7 RESTRUCTURE OF RHP DEPARTMENT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	55.8%	2618
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	34.9%	1637
I find this completely unacceptable	9.3%	435

OPTION SUMMARY

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This option was considered and recommended by Cabinet on 20 December 2012. The final results of the consultation show strong support for this option, with less than 10% of respondents stating that they believe it is unacceptable.

2.8 KENNELS SERVICE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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 having to travel to Halewood to collect their dogs.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	39.2%	1939
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	22.0%	1087
I find this completely unacceptable	38.9%	1924

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Relocating the dog kennels to Halewood was unpopular among people making comments in this section, who highlighted the excellent performance and importance of the Wirral kennels.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of the consultation show relatively strong support for this option, with almost 40% supporting its implementation and over 20% stating they would accept it. However, some comments and letters expressed concern about the impact of this option; suggestions were received from the Friends of Birkenhead Kennels organisation, and a petition has also been received opposing the option.

2.9 HOME INSULATION

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Warmer Wirral programme provides free or reduced cost home insulation for Wirral residents. There are two options in this area:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Option One: Remove the budget for the programme.	27.2%	1322
Option Two: Reduce the budget for the programme, allowing for some energy	72.8%	3536

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efficiency and fuel poverty work to continue.		
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OPTION SUMMARY

This option was considered and recommended by Cabinet on 20 December 2012. The results of this option show strong support for reducing the budget for the programme, while still allowing for some energy efficiency and fuel poverty work to continue.

2.10 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	51.0%	2474
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	32.3%	1570
I find this completely unacceptable	16.7%	811

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of the consultation show strong support for this option, with over 50% of respondents supporting its implementation.

2.11 TRADING STANDARDS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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 and will lead to a reduction in staff.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	26.0%	1272
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	36.7%	1791
I find this completely unacceptable	37.3%	1821

OPTION SUMMARY

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The final consultation results show a mixed reaction to this option, with almost 40% opposing its implementation but over 25% stating they would support and over 35% saying they would accept a reduction in the team.

2.12 PEST CONTROL

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Pest Control service provides a treatment service to residents and companies. The option in this area involves reducing the service, which will lead to a reduction in staff.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	24.0%	1175
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	36.8%	1806
I find this completely unacceptable	39.2%	1920

OPTION SUMMARY

The final consultation results show a mixed reaction to this option, with almost 40% opposing its implementation but just under 25% stating they would support and over 35% saying they would accept a reduction.

2.13 HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	23.9%	1175
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	30.1%	1483
I find this completely unacceptable	46.0%	2263

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Comments here were concerned that reductions would lead to safety issues. Investments in unnecessary road signs were also highlighted as areas where savings could be made.

OPTION SUMMARY

The final consultation results show a mixed reaction to this option, with over 45% opposing its implementation but almost 25% stating they would support and 30% saying they would accept a reduction in pro-active maintenance.

2.14 STREET LIGHTING

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	37.6%	1860
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	32.0%	1583
I find this completely unacceptable	30.5%	1508

OPTION SUMMARY

The final results of the consultation show relatively strong support for this option, with over 35% stating they would accept its implementation.

2.15 HIGHWAYS DRAINAGE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	22.7%	1115
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	35.6%	1750
I find this completely unacceptable	41.7%	2049

OPTION SUMMARY

The final consultation results show a mixed reaction to this option, with 40% opposing its implementation, and comments highlighting further

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concerns, but over 20% stating that they would support and over 35% stating they would accept a reduction in pro-active maintenance.

2.16 STREET CLEANSING

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	21.8%	1071
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	34.2%	1680
I find this completely unacceptable	44.0%	2161

OPTION SUMMARY

The final consultation results show a mixed reaction to this option, with 44% opposing its implementation, and comments highlighting further concerns, but over 20% stating they would support and almost 35% stating they would accept its implementation.

2.17 SCHOOL CROSSING PATROLS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	32.2%	1598
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	22.2%	1103
I find this completely unacceptable	45.5%	2257

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Concerns were expressed regarding the potential impact to safety, and did not believe crossing patrols should be removed. A number of people also commented however that crossing patrols should not be in place where there is already a pedestrian crossing.

OPTION SUMMARY

The final consultation results show a mixed reaction to this option, with 45.5% opposing its implementation but over 30% stating they would support and over 20% stating they would accept its implementation.

2.18 REMOVAL OF THE MAINTENANCE OF PARKS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	14.5%	725
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	26.6%	1328
I find this completely unacceptable	58.9%	2948

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Parks, and particularly bowling greens, were highlighted as being important to the quality of life of our residents. Comments stated that they would support a reduction, but not a removal, of the service. A number of letters and emails have also been received, particularly from bowling clubs and teams, expressing opposition to this option.

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

The Friends of the Parks were notified about the saving options in the Parks and Countryside Service via email in early November and given the links to the on line consultation and access to paper copies of the consultation. In addition staff consulted with the Friends Groups at individual meetings, with the Friends of Parks Steering Group and at the Parks Forum in December.

Bowling clubs were contacted by e-mail or telephone in early November to inform them that one of the options was the cessation of the maintenance of the bowling greens. Council officers attended the Annual General Meeting of the Crown Green Bowling clubs in November to inform them of the options. Generally the clubs appreciated being contacted, and said they would let their members know and complete the online questionnaire.

The Friends of Parks, Crown Green Bowling Clubs and coastal and biodiversity groups were more in favour of the £450K saving option

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(Section 2.19 of this report) and were opposed to the £850K withdrawal of maintenance option.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of the consultation, together with letters and emails from residents and user groups, demonstrate opposition to the option to remove all maintenance, but would accept the option relating to reducing the maintenance of Parks.

2.19 REDUCTION IN THE MAINTENANCE OF PARKS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	30.1%	1501
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	37.9%	1894
I find this completely unacceptable	32.0%	1598

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of this option show relatively strong support for reducing the service. 30% would support the implementation of this option, and over 35% would accept it.

2.20 HOUSING SUPPORT FOR BME COMMUNITIES

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Part of the Council's supporting people team is a small service which helps to provide support for people from black and minority ethnic (BME) 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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	61.1%	2987
I accept this if it is absolutely	26.8%	1311

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necessary		
I find this completely unacceptable	12.0%	588

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of this question show strong support for the implementation of this option, with over 60% stating they would support, and 26.8% stating that they would accept the removal of this service.

2.21 SUPPORTING PEOPLE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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 and closing services.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	35.0%	1702
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	35.7%	1736
I find this completely unacceptable	29.3%	1426

OPTION SUMMARY

Again, the results of this question provide relatively strong support for this option – with 35% stating they would support and a further 35% stating they would accept its implementation.

2.22 INVESTING IN WIRRAL'S BUSINESSES

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	47.1%	2256
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	37.3%	1788

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I find this completely unacceptable	15.6%	750
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OPTION SUMMARY

The results of this question show strong support for this option, with almost 50% of respondents stating that they would support its implementation.

2.23 COMMUNITY PATROL AND DOG FOULING

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	34.3%	1687
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	30.8%	1511
I find this completely unacceptable	34.9%	1715

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Comments in this section focussed on enforcement, with a number of people believing that the dog fouling team is not visible enough at present and that therefore there is not enough of a deterrent. A further theme in this area was to increase the fines and make the team self sufficient.

OPTION SUMMARY

The consultation is demonstrating relatively strong support for this option. The only real concerns highlighted regularly were related to dog fouling, and a number of suggestions to improve performance were made.

2.24 MODERNISATION OF LEISURE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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

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reducing the staff requirements for the sauna operation at Guinea Gap Leisure Centre among others.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	42.3%	2081
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	36.3%	1786
I find this completely unacceptable	21.5%	1057

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Comments were concerned that reducing the availability of leisure centres would have a potentially detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of the borough.

OPTION SUMMARY

Some concerns were highlighted through comments related to this option, but the results of this question show strong support, with over 40% supporting and over 35% accepting its implementation.

BUDGET OPTIONS FEEDBACK: FAMILIES AND WELLBEING

1.0 SUMMARY

The majority of options contained within this theme related to services provided through the Adult Social Services and Children's Services Departments, including social care, children's centres, and education among others.

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

2.0 BUDGET OPTIONS

2.1 COMMUNITY MEALS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	48.5%	2334
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	31.8%	1531
I find this completely unacceptable	19.7%	946

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

There are currently 496 people accessing this service; should this option be taken, further work will be done with those groups to ensure they all have the opportunity to influence the design of the new service.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results to this question show support for the implementation of the option, with over 45% stating they support for the option, and over 30% stating that they would accept an increase in charges.

2.2 ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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 fall detectors. These devices are installed and monitored 24 hours

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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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	53.7%	2582
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	29.4%	1414
I find this completely unacceptable	16.9%	812

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

There are currently around 4500 people accessing this service; should this option be taken, further work will be done with those groups to ensure they all have the opportunity to influence the design of the new service.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results to this question show support for the implementation of the option, with over 50% stating they support the option and almost 30% stating that they would accept the introduction of a weekly charge.

2.3 CHARGING FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	30.5%	1445
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	33.9%	1604
I find this completely unacceptable	35.6%	1685

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

A series of events and consultation activity with organisations such as the Carers Development Committee and user groups from Council Day Centres have been convened to discuss all budget options in this area. Feedback in this area centred on concerns over a person's ability to pay for care.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of this question show relatively strong support for this option, with just under two thirds of the response stating that they would either support or accept an increase in charges; concern was raised however in relation to the person in receipt of the care being able to pay and suggestions have been made to ensure this is taken to account.

2.4 TARGETED SUPPORT THROUGH NHS CONTRACTS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	35.4%	1665
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	33.9%	1598
I find this completely unacceptable	30.7%	1447

OPTION SUMMARY

This option shows relatively strong support, with over 35% stating that they would support and over 30% stating they would accept savings being made through working with the NHS to reduce costs.

2.5 EXTRA CARE HOUSING

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	47.5%	2247
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	34.0%	1609
I find this completely	18.4%	872

unacceptable		
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OPTION SUMMARY

The results to this question show support for this option, with less than 20% of people opposing the re-tender of these contracts.

2.6 RESIDENTIAL AND RESPITE CARE**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	25.2%	1215
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	29.6%	1426
I find this completely unacceptable	45.2%	2179

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Where residential and respite care was mentioned in comments, people were concerned that there is no reduction in the quality of the service.

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

A series of events and consultation activity with organisations such as the Carers Development Committee and user groups from Council Day Centres have been convened to discuss all budget options in this area. Feedback in this area was focussed on the quality of the care provided by the Council and other organisations, and concerns were expressed relating to shared facilities for people with learning disabilities and people with mental health difficulties. It was suggested that more thought should be given to this issue if the option was to be progressed; further consultation around this option is continuing.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of this option show a mixed response, with the majority of responses stating they would either support or accept the option (25.2% would support, 29.6% would accept), but over 45% opposing its implementation, with some concerns expressed by user groups in this area – with suggestions being made to ensure these concerns are taken into account.

2.7 DAY CARE AND DAY SERVICES TRANSFORMATION

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	35.1%	1681
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	37.4%	1790
I find this completely unacceptable	27.4%	1313

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

A series of events and consultation activity with organisations such as the Carers Development Committee and user groups from Council Day Centres have been convened to discuss all budget options in this area. Feedback in this area centred on the selection criteria for which centres would close, potential transport implications and concerns were also raised about the lack of investment in the centres in the past.

OPTION SUMMARY

The final results of the consultation show relatively strong support for this option, over 35% of respondents would accept, and over 35% would support, its implementation. People using the services would prefer all sites to remain open and be invested in but, if the option was accepted, would be fully consulted and involved in the policies developed to alleviate the concerns mentioned above related to transport etc, and suggestions have been made to ensure these concerns are taken into account.

2.8 REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR CARERS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

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Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	39.0%	1853
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	37.6%	1787
I find this completely unacceptable	23.4%	1115

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

Organisations such as the Carers Development Committee and Agencies for Carers Executive (ACE) submitted responses to the consultation and provided their views across all budget options. Concerns were raised in relation to the potential financial impact from this option.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of the consultation show strong support for this option, with almost 40% of respondents stating that they would support, and over 35% stating that they would accept its implementation, although Carers' organisations did express some concern in relation to the financial impact on Carers.

2.9 TRANSPORT POLICIES

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	35.2%	1691
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	33.1%	1591
I find this completely unacceptable	31.7%	1520

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Where transport was mentioned, it was generally regarding children with disabilities – people were concerned at the impact if this was to be removed entirely.

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

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A series of events and consultation activity with organisations such as the Carers Development Committee and user groups from Council Day Centres, schools, youth services and other services for children have been convened to discuss all budget options in this area. Feedback in this area centred on ensuring that any changes to transport policies did not make it impossible for people to use and access services, and leave communities or vulnerable people isolated.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of the consultation show strong support for this option, with over 35% of respondents stating that they would support, and almost 35% stating that they would accept a review of the service.

2.10 AREA TEAMS FOR FAMILY SUPPORT

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	23.4%	1106
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	26.7%	1261
I find this completely unacceptable	50.0%	2364

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of the consultation show a mixed response to this option, with 50% of people stating that they would oppose its implementation.

2.11 SCHOOLS MUSIC SERVICE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	47.9%	2274
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	32.4%	1538
I find this completely unacceptable	19.8%	939

OPTION SUMMARY

The final consultation results show strong support for this option, with less than 20% opposing its implementation.

2.12 OAKLANDS OUTDOOR EDUCATION CENTRE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	42.4%	2008
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	33.5%	1589
I find this completely unacceptable	24.1%	1141

OPTION SUMMARY

The final consultation results show strong support for this option, with over 40% stating that they would support and over 30% stating they would accept its implementation.

2.13 EDUCATION PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	27.1%	1282
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	31.9%	1510
I find this completely unacceptable	41.0%	1939

OPTION SUMMARY

This option was considered and recommended by Cabinet on 20 December 2012. The final consultation results show a mixed reaction to this option, with over 40% opposing its implementation but almost 30% supporting and over 30% stating they would accept a reduction in the service.

2.14 FOUNDATION LEARNING

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	33.9%	1585
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	33.8%	1579
I find this completely unacceptable	32.3%	1511

OPTION SUMMARY

The final results of the consultation show relatively strong support for this option, with almost 35% of respondents stating that they would support, and almost 35% stating they would accept, its implementation.

2.15 COMMISSIONING OF PARENTING SERVICES

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	32.0%	1497
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	36.3%	1700
I find this completely unacceptable	31.7%	1484

OPTION SUMMARY

The final results of the consultation show relatively strong support for this option, with over 30% of respondents stating that they would support, and over 35% stating they would accept, its implementation.

2.16 SCHOOLS BUDGET

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	40.9%	1910
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	31.8%	1485
I find this completely unacceptable	27.3%	1272

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Most comments mentioning schools believed that schools should not be required to meet any further costs.

OPTION SUMMARY

The final results of the consultation show strong support for this option, with over 40% of respondents stating that they would support, and over 30% stating they would accept, its implementation.

2.17 SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND INCOME FROM SCHOOLS

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	43.2%	2004
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	33.8%	1565
I find this completely unacceptable	23.0%	1067

OPTION SUMMARY

The final results of the consultation show strong support for this option, with almost 45% of respondents stating that they would support and over 30% would accept its implementation. Detailed consultation and engagement with schools is ongoing in relation to this option.

2.18 REVIEW OF VCF SECTOR GRANTS**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	45.5%	2134
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	35.6%	1666
I find this completely unacceptable	18.9%	885

OPTION SUMMARY

The final results of the consultation show strong support for this option, with over 45% of respondents stating that they would support and over 35% would accept its implementation.

2.19 ASSESSMENT AND CARE MANAGEMENT**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	26.0%	1210
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	30.8%	1429
I find this completely unacceptable	43.2%	2006

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

In addition to the staff consultation detailed in the substantive report, a series of half day workshops were held with both Council and NHS staff regarding this option. These workshops focussed on improving the

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overall experience customers receive, in particular the assessment process, and resulted in a number of suggestions being put forward from staff.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of this question show a mixed response to this option, with over 40% of respondents opposing its implementation but over 25% stating they would support and a further 30% stating they would accept a review of the service.

2.20 REVIEW OF RESIDENTIAL CARE FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	41.2%	1929
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	35.5%	1661
I find this completely unacceptable	23.3%	1088

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

A series of events and consultation activity with organisations such as the Carers Development Committee and user groups from Council Day Centres have been convened to discuss all budget options in this area.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of this question show strong support for the implementation of this option, with over 40% stating they would support, and 35.5% stating that they would accept the review of this service.

2.21 REVIEW OF EQUIPMENT AND EMERGENCY DUTY

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the	48.5%	2272

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circumstances		
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	36.3%	1701
I find this completely unacceptable	15.2%	712

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of this question provide strong support for this option – with almost 50% stating they would support and over 35% stating they would accept its implementation.

2.22 YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICES

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	29.4%	1509
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	28.5%	1460
I find this completely unacceptable	42.1%	2155

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Potential impacts of reducing youth services were frequently mentioned in comments, including antisocial behaviour. Specific facilities such as Wirral Youth Theatre, Gautby Road Play Area and St Mary's Youth Club were also mentioned frequently as being excellent services. A number of petitions were also received in relation to specific youth clubs, which are detailed in the substantive report. Letters were also received regarding both Wirral Youth Theatre and Belvidere Youth Club expressing support for those services.

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

Detailed consultation work has been completed with people using youth services to ensure their input is sought in a redesigned and consolidated service.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of this question show a mixed view on this option, with over 40% stating that they find this option unacceptable but almost 30% stating they support and almost 30% stating they would accept its implementation.

2.23 YOUTH CHALLENGE**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	33.5%	1607
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	33.5%	1607
I find this completely unacceptable	33.0%	1583

OPTION SUMMARY

The final results of the consultation show relatively strong support for this option, with over 30% stating they would support and over 30% stating they would accept its implementation.

2.24 CHILDREN'S CENTRES AND SURE START**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	27.1%	1286
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	29.4%	1397
I find this completely unacceptable	43.5%	2063

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

The majority of comments which mentioned Children's Centres were against any reduction in the service, particularly in more deprived areas of the borough.

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

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Detailed consultation work has been completed with people using Children's Centres, as well as email communications being distributed to people registered to receive updates about children's centres events and activities. Concern has been raised in relation to accessing services suggestions have been made to ensure this is taken into account.

Summary:

The results of this question show a mixed view on this option, with over 40% stating that they find this option unacceptable but over 25% stating they support and almost 30% stating they would accept a reduction in the budget and outsourcing of parts of the service.

2.25 HELP AND ADVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	32.8%	1563
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	33.6%	1605
I find this completely unacceptable	33.6%	1602

ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION

Detailed consultation work has been completed with people using this service and staff to ensure their input is sought in a potentially re-provided service. Concerns have been raised regarding the quality of the service which may be provided through the VCF sector and also the potential for older people to become at risk, which should be mitigated through any commissioning process to re-provision this service elsewhere.

OPTION SUMMARY

The results of this option show relatively strong support for this option, with over 30% stating that they would support and over 30% stating they would accept the re-provision of this service.

2.26 CAREERS, EDUCATION INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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The Council provides through a contract 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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	36.8%	1730
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	36.3%	1704
I find this completely unacceptable	26.9%	1266

QUESTIONNAIRE COMMENTS

Items such as careers education, psychology services and others were mentioned in comments as being extremely important and services which should not be cut, particularly in the light of increasing numbers of young people becoming NEET.

OPTION SUMMARY

This option was considered and recommended by Cabinet in December 2012, and the final results show relatively strong support for its implementation, with over 35% of respondents stating that they would support and over 35% stating they would accept a reduction in the service.

2.27 SHORT BREAKS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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 short breaks which are provided, while still providing the service.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	19.8%	944
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	29.7%	1420
I find this completely unacceptable	50.5%	2415

OPTION SUMMARY

A slight majority of respondents, 50.5%, opposed this option and believe that it is unacceptable to reduce the service.

2.28 CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

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PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I support this under the circumstances	18.4%	869
I accept this if it is absolutely necessary	27.2%	1286
I find this completely unacceptable	54.4%	2573

OPTION SUMMARY

The majority of respondents, 54.4%, opposed this option and believe that it is unacceptable to reduce the service.

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BUDGET OPTIONS FEEDBACK: GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1.0 SUMMARY

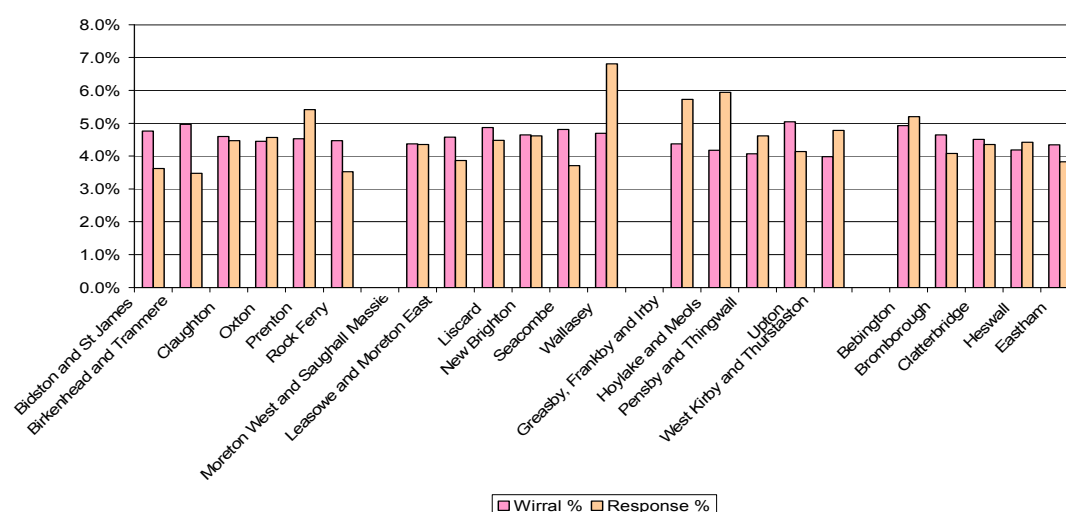
The questionnaire asked a range of demographic and geographic questions in order to measure how representative the response sample was, when compared to the population of Wirral as a whole.

These questions were optional and represent an important element of the Council's attempt to discharge its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. 5,175 respondents provided responses in this section, representing a return of 80% respondents willing to share information about their equality and diversity details.

2.0 GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

People responding to the questionnaire were asked to provide their post code to enable the Council to ensure that all communities in Wirral were represented in the presented results.

5,220 (80%) of respondents gave us their location information and this provides us with a strong basis for evidencing a representative participation in the consultation. The following chart shows the percentage of respondents who completed the survey against the proportion of the population living in each ward in Wirral.



This shows that broadly, residents in Prenton, Wallasey, Greasby, Frankby and Irby and Hoylake and Meols are slightly over-represented in the survey, whilst Bidston and St James, Birkenhead and Tranmere, Rock Ferry, Leasowe and Moreton East, Upton and Bromborough are all slightly under represented.

Generally, it is acknowledged that more deprived areas are often under represented in research consultations. However, a significant effort was made to undertake and focus consultation and awareness raising

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events in these areas and this has led to a survey sample that is considerably more reflective of Wirral's population than would otherwise be the case.

The chart below provides this analysis based on Parliamentary Constituencies.



This demonstrates that Birkenhead is under represented by 2.7%, and Wirral West is over represented within the sample by about 3.6%. It further shows that, as a Parliamentary Constituency, Wallasey and Wirral South are represented almost exactly.

3.0 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS – Equality and Diversity

A number of questions were asked relating to people's demographics. The results to a selection of these questions are provided below:

Gender:

Are you:		
Answer Options	Wirral %	Response %
Male	48%	45%
Female	52%	55%

Age:

What was your age on your last birthday?

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Answer Options	Wirral %	Response %
Under 16	20%	4%
16-24	9%	4%
25-44	24%	28%
45-64	28%	42%
65+	19%	22%

Disability:

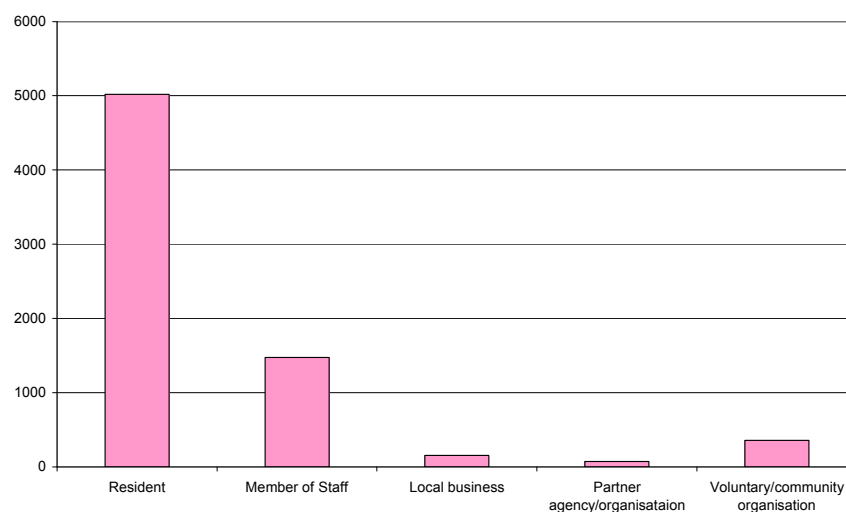
Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	10.6%	526
No	83.8%	4147
Prefer not to say	5.5%	273

Ethnicity

93% of respondents to the consultation were White English or White British. This is actually slightly under-representative of the 'White British' population in Wirral. Based upon the 2011 Census, 94.7% of people in Wirral consider themselves to be 'White British', suggesting that Black and Minority Ethnic groups are well represented within the sample.

4.0 RELATIONSHIP TO COUNCIL

A further important question which was asked and used to analyse the responses to the consultation was regarding the relationship between the respondent and the Council. The vast majority of our respondents are residents of Wirral. 787 people stated that they were both a resident and member of staff.



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