

## **Adults Social Services Task Force: Options and Recommendations**

### **Introduction**

'Wirral's Future' is the largest and most far-reaching consultation exercise ever undertaken by the Council. The decision to develop it was initiated at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2010 in response to the existing budgetary challenges faced by the local authority. The level of engagement undertaken within the scope of the consultation has been significant, with over 40,000 paper questionnaires being distributed, as well as being available online. Through the consultation road show, 10,000 people were directly engaged.

Four independent Task Forces were established with a remit to review the Council's services in relation to four areas: Economy and Regeneration; Living in Wirral; Adult Social Services and Children and Young People's Services. The Task Forces were independently chaired. Task Forces were asked to develop a series of options papers which would form the basis of a wider public consultation and programme of engagement with residents, staff, businesses and stakeholders in the voluntary, community and faith sector. The key mechanism for consultation and engagement activities was a questionnaire based on the options papers which contained a general Part A (including questions about satisfaction with Wirral as a place to live) and four themed sections relating to each of the Task Forces. Information relating to the Task Forces and the how the public consultation was undertaken is available at [www.wirral.gov.uk/wirralfuture](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/wirralfuture)

### **Adult Social Services Task Force**

Discussions took place across the following areas:

- Demand
- Costs
- Income

The Task Force discussed the levels of existing spend on Adult Social Services in Wirral, both in terms of the total population and in comparison with other similar authorities. Particular focus was given to the fact that £40m per year in expenditure was directed towards residential care for 1,800 people. The Task Force also considered that the general demographic of Wirral was that of an ageing population, which could (according to research) mean that care costs double by 2026.

Further to these discussions, the Task Force agreed a series of options that they wished to be considered and for consultation with the public. The section of the questionnaire relating to adult social services was developed in accordance with the options proposed by the Task Force. The questions asked and the consultation responses can be found at [www.wirral.gov.uk/wirralfuture](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/wirralfuture)

This document revisits the original options proposed by the Adult Social Services Task Force and makes recommendations for the Council's Cabinet. These have been agreed following consideration of the consultation responses at a final meeting of the Task Force.

## **Options and Recommendations**

In relation to <b>Demand</b> the Task Force suggests
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The Council **must**:

### **Option 1**

Continue to provide support for vulnerable people falling into the Critical\* level of need. Over the past year, 2,403 new care packages have been set up (average 200 per month) with 42 being assessed as having a critical need.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet.**

<sup>1</sup>

The Council **should**:

### **Option 2**

Continue to provide support to people assessed as having Critical and Substantial\* need. Out of 23 authorities in the North West, 17 provide support to people assessed as having Critical and Substantial need, with another 6 also providing support to people with Moderate and Low need. However, due to the budget situation nationally this is expected to change.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet.**

### **Option 3**

Continue to develop and promote personal budgets to support people with Substantial need. Personal budgets enable people to procure their own care and have recently been piloted in Wirral. The Task Force suggests the Council reviews the system for personal budget allocations to determine how costs can be reduced.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet.**

### **Option 4**

Develop the voluntary sector to deliver the support needed for people with 'Substantial' and 'Critical' need. It is suggested by the Task Force that the Council and the voluntary sector work together to develop a shared agenda, a Wirral-wide directory of preventative services and seek to develop and bid for external funding to deliver these services.

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<sup>1</sup> Fair Access to Care National Criteria

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet. It was also recommended that particular emphasis must be placed on building the capacity of all partners to enable the delivery of services within the voluntary, community and faith sector.**

#### **Option 5**

Continue to place an important emphasis on preventative services as these help people to remain living independently and help reduce the costs of care.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet.**

The Council should **stop**:

No areas were identified within the 'Demand' theme that it was thought that the authority should immediately stop.

In relation to <b>Costs</b> , the Task Force suggests
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Within this theme, there is particular emphasis on the possibility of purchasing services from the voluntary, community, faith and independent sector. The Task Force recommends that, across all areas, the Council should retain responsibility for the monitoring of services in terms of delivery, value for money and return on investment.

The Council **must**:

#### **Option 6**

Continue to provide Personal Support, particularly to those people identified as having Critical and Substantial need. The Council purchases this support at a cost of around £12.28 per hour, which is extremely competitive with third and private sector providers.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet.**

The Council **should**:

#### **Option 7**

Continue to provide and modernise Day Time activities as the disruption from any attempt to reduce current day time provision now would outweigh any potential financial benefit. Day Centre Services account for £7.9m annual expenditure and provide support for 2,617 people.

The Task Force feels that the implementation of Personal Budgets could potentially see a future decrease in demand for day services in their current form but until this happens the services should be continued.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet, with an emphasis on continuous monitoring of these services in terms of their suitability and cost-effectiveness.**

The Council should **stop**:

#### **Option 8**

Directly providing residential and respite care. It is instead suggested that these services should be procured from the private and voluntary sector, who will be stringently quality controlled in order to provide the service at identical or improved quality, at a lower cost.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet after reviewing the results of the consultation and considering the greater value for money which can be gained by procuring these services from the private and voluntary, community and faith sectors.**

#### **Option 9**

The Task Force suggests that the Home Assessment and Reablement Team (HART) should be amended – with the Assessment section retained and the ‘Enablement’ part of the service procured from the voluntary, community and faith sector.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet. It was also recommended that the entire service should be reviewed to ensure there is no increased bureaucracy.**

#### **Option 10**

The Task Force suggests that all Home Care and Supported Living services currently directly provided by the Department of Adult Social Services could be better provided in terms of efficiency and cost effectiveness by external providers and that this option should be seriously considered.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet.**

#### **Option 11**

The Task Force suggests that the Council stops paying Care Home fees around 10% more than in neighbouring areas. The Task Force recommends reducing these rates to bring them in line with neighbouring Council areas.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet.**

In relation to <b>Income</b> , the Task Force suggests
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The Council **must**:

#### **Option 12**

The Council must continue to work with vulnerable people to ensure that their benefits are maximised.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet. It is also recommended that this work should continue be done in partnership with voluntary, community and faith sector partners who provide these services.**

#### **Option 13**

The Council must continue to charge for people supported in residential care.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet.**

The Council should:

#### **Option 14**

Continue to charge for people supported in their own home for which discretionary local rules apply. Currently the Council charges 75% of disposable income. However the Task Force has suggested that this should move towards the 100% in line with some neighbouring authorities.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet.**

#### **Option 15**

The Council currently charges for Community Meals but this service is also subsidised. The Task Force suggests that this charge should be raised to make this service cost neutral.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet.**

The Council should stop:

#### **Option 16**

The Assistive Technology service is a free, preventative service which provides hi-tech, low impact monitoring of people in their own home. It is currently provided to 1400 people in Wirral. The Council is investing in the service to take the users up to 14,500 over the next three years. The Task Force suggests that the Council, like other neighbouring authorities, should charge a nominal amount for this service.

**This option was upheld by the Task Force as a recommendation to Cabinet. It was also recommended that the Council closely monitors uptake of the service to ensure it is not impacted by the introduction of charging. It was also made clear that the equipment itself is not chargeable, only the monitoring aspect.**