

## **DESCRIPTION OF OPTION**

The option outlined below could make £2 million savings from the Supporting People budget effective from April 2014.

## **RATIONALE FOR SAVINGS**

The Supporting People programme currently costs £9.75 million and delivers services to approximately 5,500 clients in Wirral. The service providers employ approximately 450 members of staff.

The service ensures that vulnerable or disadvantaged people with housing related support needs are supported to maintain their tenancies and achieve/maintain greater independence.

Supporting People funding was previously ring-fenced and the criteria for its use was clearly set down by Department for Communities and Local Government, as was the structure for commissioning and contracting.

Whilst the services are not statutory the support is designed to help some of the most vulnerable people in the community to live independently and prevent problems that can often lead to hospitalisation, institutional care, custody, tenancy breakdown.

## **IMPACT**

The Council must continue to ensure that the most vulnerable people with housing support needs remain able to access appropriate support services and accommodation (such as sheltered and supported housing for older people, hostels for the homeless, refuge for women and children fleeing domestic violence, supported housing for people with mental health problems and learning disabilities).

Service reduction will impact on the individuals and also on corporate priorities of:

- Protecting our vulnerable adults and children
- Tackling poverty and inequalities in health
- Creating jobs and attracting investment

It could also have negative implications for other departmental budgets, through increases in: Anti-social Behaviour; health inequalities; demand on other areas / services within the public sector; levels of children entering statutory care; tenancy failure leading to increased homelessness; incidences of people entering costly residential or nursing care; dissatisfaction in the local community.

Due to the level of savings required it will have an impact on the choice and availability of services locally, and could lead to a reduction in employment in Wirral, including that provided by the voluntary, community and faith sector.

## **MITIGATION**

To date, through tendering and renegotiations of contracts and some reconfiguration and rationalisation of services, significant efficiency savings of £590,000 have been made, while the level and type of services available to vulnerable people has been maintained.

However, given the current economic situation, it is necessary to achieve further savings from contracted services through the following actions:

- Re-negotiation of contracts to increase efficiency, effectiveness and to better utilise resources
- Tendering of services
- Remodelling of provisions
- Consolidation and rationalisation of contracts
- Closure of services.