

APPENDIX THREE

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The Council provide an outdated, but appreciated, meals-on-wheels service.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

APPENDIX THREE

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.

APPENDIX THREE

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

APPENDIX THREE

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

APPENDIX THREE

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.

APPENDIX THREE

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

APPENDIX THREE

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

APPENDIX THREE

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.

APPENDIX THREE

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

APPENDIX THREE

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.

APPENDIX THREE

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

APPENDIX THREE

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

APPENDIX THREE

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.

APPENDIX THREE

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

APPENDIX THREE

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

APPENDIX THREE

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

APPENDIX THREE

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.