

## APPENDIX THREE

### **BUDGET OPTION: CHARGING FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL SERVICES**

#### **1.0 OUTLINE OF PROPOSAL**

- 1.1 The Council has the ability to charge people for the social care services they receive. These charges are for services which include home care, supported living, day care and transport.
- 1.2 Most Councils charge for these services and many Councils charge 100% of a person's disposable income, minus a buffer of 25%. Wirral currently charges 75% of a person's disposable income and the option in this area is to increase this level to 100% from April 2013, minus the buffer of 25% which is required by statutory government guidance.
- 1.3 This option will increase the contributions made for their care by vulnerable and elderly people. However, the charges are based entirely on a person's ability to pay, and will bring our levels of charges in line with other Councils in the North West.

#### **2.0 RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 Local authorities have discretionary powers under Section 17 of the Health and Social Services and Social Security Adjudication Act 1983 to charge adult recipients of non-residential care services. Charging for non-residential services is covered in the Local Authority Circular LAC (2001)32 - Fairer Charging Policies for Home Care and Other non-residential Social Services published by the Department of Health in November 2001. The Fairer Charging guidance allows local authorities to decide whether to charge for services and there is quite significant scope for local discretion.
- 2.2 Further guidance was issued by the Department of Health in July 2009 to supplement the Fairer Charging guidance. This fairer contributions guidance provides a model for calculating a person's contribution to their personal budget.
- 2.3 The assessed charge is based on the person's ability to pay and, unless they are assessed to pay the maximum charge for their services, it is a contribution towards their package of care irrespective of the type or volume of support provided.
- 2.4 Benchmarking information has been obtained to compare the charge applied by Wirral with that of other North West Authorities. This is shown in the table below:

<b>Council</b>	<b>% Charge against Disposable income</b>
Wirral	75

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Wigan	75
Sefton	80
Lancashire	85
Rochdale	90
Cheshire East	97
Blackpool	100
Bury	100
Cumbria	100
St Helen's	100
Stockport	100
Tameside	100
Trafford	100

- 2.5 The potential impact on an individual's weekly charge from an increase in the charging policy is provided in the table below. The examples shown cover the most common weekly assessed charges.

Current Charge	Revised Weekly Charge			
	85%	90%	95%	100%
£12.13	£13.75	£14.56	£15.37	£16.18
£17.11	£19.39	£20.53	£21.67	£22.81
£19.88	£22.54	£23.87	£25.20	£26.53
£55.78	£63.22	£66.94	£70.66	£74.38
£63.53	£72.01	£76.25	£80.49	£84.73

### 3.0 ACCESSIBILITY OF PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The option in relation to charging for non-residential services was published alongside a series of other options from the Chief Executive on November 9<sup>th</sup> 2012. These options were published following an extensive period of consultation during September and October 2012, which focussed on broad principles of policy to gather initial views on how options should be developed.
- 3.2 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 this and all other options. 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.

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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.

- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.

### **4.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- 4.1 An extensive programme of public consultation was completed in relation to all options which were published in November 2012. This programme included over 100 community events at locations such as libraries, supermarkets, cinemas, community centres and children's centres.
- 4.2 Extensive online promotion of the consultation was also completed, with emails being sent to over 13,000 residents, and the consultation also featured prominently on the Council's website which receives in excess of 1,000 hits per day.
- 4.3 Organisations from the Voluntary, Community and Faith sectors were also actively encouraged to take part in this consultation process. Consultation responses were received from organisations such as Wirral Mencap and the Association for Carers' Executive (ACE), based in Wallasey.
- 4.4 A series of detailed meetings, covering all budget options, was also held with key organisations. These organisations included the Carers'

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Development Committee, Carers Association and the Enabling Fulfilling Lives Group among others.

- 4.5 A full programme of presentations and workshops were held in Council Day Centres and residential and respite facilities, which were extremely well attended and involved a full discussion of the proposed options, its potential impact and the mitigation which could be implemented.
- 4.6 A series of meetings scheduled to discuss this and other options people were provided with a detailed presentation related to the budget options involved. This provided people with the rationale for proposing the options, the potential impact of the option and proposed efforts to mitigate this impact. These meetings are listed below:

<b>Group / Centre</b>	<b>Date</b>
Carers Association	28.11.12
Carers Development Committee	30.11.12
Highcroft	14.12.12
Eastham Day Centre	7.1.13
Heswall Day Centre	10.1.13
Highcroft	14.1.13
Moreton Day Centre	17.1.13
Enabling Fulfilling Lives Group	18.1.13
Beaconsfield	29.1.13
Fernleigh	30.1.13
Sylvandale	4.2.13
Girtrell Court	7.2.13

- 4.7 People using services were also assisted throughout the consultation period to complete the online and paper based questionnaire, in easy read format, with help from other people using services, staff and the videos which were produced.

### 5.0 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

- 5.1 In terms of the public consultation process, the response to the questionnaire demonstrated broad support from Wirral residents, staff and other stakeholders as to the implementation of this option. The table below shows the response to the public consultation:

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
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

- 5.2 At the series of consultation meetings at key sites as described above, people attending were provided with a detailed presentation related to the budget options involved. This presentation provided people with the

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rationale for proposing the options, which is outlined in section 2.0 of this report.

- 5.3 People were then given the opportunity to ask questions of Council officers and also to have those questions fed into the consultation process; either through completing a questionnaire or by having their comments noted at the meeting, or with any Council officer they worked with at any convenient time.
- 5.4 It is clear from the notes from these meetings that the only major concern around this option was the person's ability to pay, and the potential impact of increasing charges on the person receiving care.

### **6.0 POTENTIAL IMPACT IDENTIFIED**

- 6.1 Whilst the service will remain unchanged the proposal will increase the contributions made by vulnerable and elderly people in the borough towards the cost of their care and support.
- 6.2 People may decline the service if charges are increased and this may impact on their health and wellbeing. There may also be an impact on the level of Council debt as people may not pay the increased charge.

### **7.0 PROPOSED MITIGATION**

- 7.1 It is important that due regard is shown to the concerns highlighted throughout this consultation process. It is proposed that, should this option be considered and recommended by Cabinet and approved at Council that the following factors should be taken into account in the implementation of the option.
- 7.2 Due regard must be shown to the concerns highlighted throughout the consultation, to ensure that charges are based on a person's ability to pay and will be reviewed on a case by case basis for individuals who experience difficulty in paying their assessed charge.

### **8.0 SUMMARY**

- 8.1 The rationale for this proposal of this option is outlined within this report, together with an outline of the extensive consultation process which followed its publication. Concerns raised through this process have been highlighted and mitigation has been identified.
- 8.2 Therefore, it is felt appropriate that the decision can be taken to implement this option, while ensuring that due regard is shown to address the concerns highlighted by people during the consultation process.