

BUDGET OPTION: DAY SERVICES TRANSFORMATION

1.0 OUTLINE OF PROPOSAL

- 1.1 Currently, Wirral Council provides a number of Day Centres which support people with Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities and Mental Health difficulties. The Council is exploring ways to deliver an effective, efficient in-house service that can remain competitive, in terms of quality and cost. All of our Day Centres at the moment need substantial investment to varying degrees to bring them up to an acceptable quality standard.
- 1.2 This option will involve the complete transformation and improvement of day services; which will result in investing in some centres to make them modern, fit for purpose and suitable to provide the best possible support, but would also mean the Council providing fewer centres. The potential for Social Enterprises is also being explored. The Capital requirement is retained for modernisation as grant funded capital or it could disappear. It is currently only possible to have a specific and reduced level of improvement which is in excess of the estimated cost of modernisation, but we will work closely with services to ensure that any resources are used to best effect
- 1.3 There were two proposals published and consulted on in relation to the Day Services budget option; both of which involved the closure of one large Day Centre, and the consolidation of mental health provision into one Centre. The options further proposed the further development of day care while either being retained in house or being operated as an independent social enterprise. The full option was published alongside all other budget options on November 9th 2012 and is available on the Wirral Council website at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/whatreallymatters>
- 1.4 Whilst this proposal may result in the closure of some centres, individuals will still be able to access day services if they choose to do so whilst others, through a personal budget, may choose other ways to receive support. The demand for day services in the voluntary sector may increase as people exercise greater choice through personal budgets. The project to transform day services is developing a service model based on the needs and priorities of service users, with a particular focus on employment needs. In relation to alternative delivery vehicles, we are looking to spend 12 months extending the review of an appropriate delivery vehicle or operating model. We will consider all options, including social enterprise, mutual's or Local Authority Trading Company. We will work across the sub region to consider this further where appropriate and feasible.

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2.0 RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The Council currently operates six in-house day centres for people with physical and learning disabilities, three day centres for people with mental health needs and six day services offering “work type” placements for people with a disability. These have close links with their communities, operate increasingly personalised services and carry out a range of trading activities including catering and sale of plants and produce.
- 2.2 The model of operation needs to evolve further to meet national expectations and changing needs. The policy of offering people Personal Budgets has changed the profile of service provision. It is increasing demand for flexible support packages, which has in turn reduced demand for traditional long term day care. There is evidence that service users often attend more than one day centre and “mix and match” provision.
- 2.3 Young people who are making the transition from children’s to adult’s services are not automatically choosing to attend day centres and the majority are choosing to access alternative mainstream provision and activity.
- 2.4 Council run day centres have not been maintained to market standard and have sometimes been seen as less flexible and innovative than alternative types of provision. There is also evidence of an increasing demand for the “work type” placements delivered in six of the council’s day services. These currently offer the equivalent of around 130 full time places a day to service users and are anxious to expand the provision to manage demand.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPOSAL

- 2.5 The following factors have been taken into account to develop options to deliver a modernised service:
 - 2.5.1 The predicted demand for any future service. This has been based upon an analysis of current levels of occupancy of the day centres, future need in terms of the population of young adults coming through the transition process and the choices they are making about what type of day provision to access. This demonstrates that around 33% of the places currently available are not being used. Given the drive towards more personalised services this is likely to increase in coming years and there is a need for the department to consolidate its provision at the same time as ensuring that there is sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the learning disabled, physically disabled and mental health “populations”. Based on this analysis it will be necessary for the department to ensure sufficient capacity to support 312 people with physical and learning disabilities and 36 people with mental health needs on a daily basis.

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- 2.5.2 The requirement for sufficient capacity to meet high dependency needs. As highlighted above, there is a significant minority of service users with profound disabilities who will continue to need specialist centres.
- 2.5.3 Where services are located. Any new model of service provision has to be flexible enough to meet individual needs and take into account the increasing emphasis on services based on a locality model, nearer to where people live.
- 2.5.4 The level of capital investment in the current provision which would be required to bring centres up to a modern standard. Full condition surveys have been carried out on all buildings and it has been established that although some centres are in a much better state of repair than others, the cost of basic reparation to bring all buildings up to an acceptable standard would be £1.5m. This estimate covers only the basic repairs needed and does not include any level of improvement.
- 2.5.5 The need to deliver savings over three years as part of the council's budget strategy.

3.0 ACCESSIBILITY OF PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The option in relation to Day Services was published alongside a series of other options from the Chief Executive on November 9th 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.

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,

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

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- 4.5 A full programme of presentations and workshops were held in Council Day Centres, which were extremely well attended and involved a full discussion of the proposed option, its potential impact and the mitigation which could be implemented. The full list of meetings which were held is listed below:

Group / Centre	Date
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

- 4.6 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.

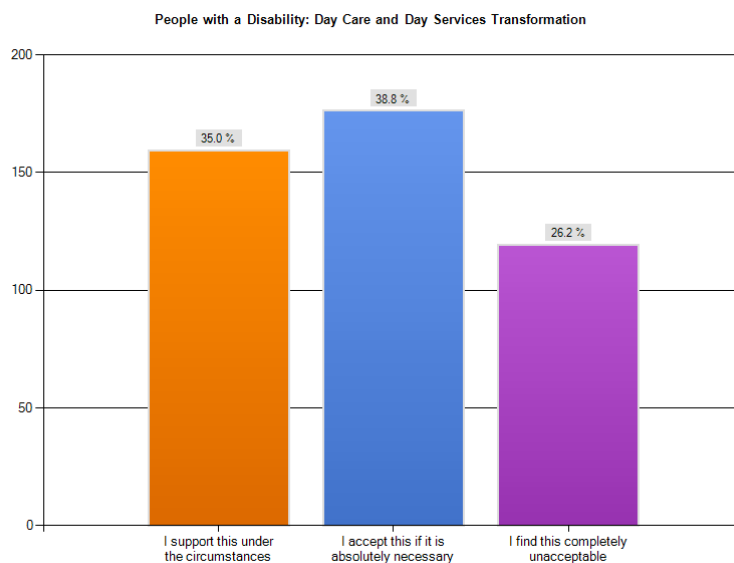
5.0 CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

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

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

- 5.2 The public consultation also asked people to identify if they considered themselves to be a disabled person. 468 people answered 'Yes' to this question, and the response from those people to the question relating to Day Services is provided below. This graph shows that people answering the questionnaire who state they have a disability are in fact slightly more in favour of this option than the overall consultation sample.

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- 5.3 At the series of consultation meetings at Day Services sites described above, people attending were provided with a detailed presentation related to the budget options involved. This presentation provided people with the rationale for proposing the options, in terms of the transformation of the service and financial issues faced by the Council, which are outlined in section 2.0 of this report.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 At each consultation event held at a Council Day Centre, the fact that a key part of this option was the closure of one or more Day Centres was made clear to all those who were in attendance.
- 5.6 It is clear from the notes from each of these meetings that those in attendance would prefer for none of the sites to close, and rather that they were invested in. However, people also accepted that the financial situation in the Council meant that was unlikely.
- 5.7 People who attended these meetings also made various points related to questioning who would be responsible for the quality of the service, if parts of the current day services were to be turned into a social enterprise. Further concerns were expressed around transport, and specifically highlighting the increased demand for transport if one or more sites were to close.
- 5.8 A number of concerns were expressed by people using services and their carers as to the staff potentially affected by this option, who were specifically worried that closing centres and reducing the number of staff

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would cause them to lose the relationships they have built up with staff over the course of many years.

- 5.9 A suggestion was also made at a number of meetings that it would be more beneficial to close three smaller day centres rather than closing one of the larger sites.

6.0 POTENTIAL IMPACT IDENTIFIED

- 6.1 The potential impact on Council staff of implementing this option was provided at the start of the process in the original options paper, and is provided below. Further potential impacts have been identified and discussed with people using services throughout the consultation process.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON STAFF

- 6.2 The closure of one large day centre and the consolidation of mental health services will result in a saving of £2 million over three years but will include a reduction of staff. There will be a resale value to the Council if the sites of the former day centres are sold.
- 6.3 There are significant implications for staff arising from these proposals. Posts will be lost and full consultation with staff and trade unions has been undertaken. In addition there are significant skills development issues to be addressed with remaining staff as the service moves into its new model.
- 6.4 It is anticipated that the creation of a social enterprise network will generate additional efficiencies within the day services budget and these will form part of the plan to commission this service. There will be significant implications for staff working within these services as they move forward into a new organisation.
- 6.5 All of the options for modernising day services involve the closure of Council run buildings with the resultant risk to staff employed. Whilst management has been covering vacancies with agency staff there is still a potential impact on up to 82 staff directly employed by the Council. Detailed Equality Impact Assessments have been completed in relation to potential staff impacts due to budget options.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON PEOPLE USING SERVICES

- 6.6 As mentioned above, people using services made repeated references as to their concerns over the quality of a future service which may not be delivered directly by Wirral Council.
- 6.7 The accessibility of services, in relation to physical transport to and from sites, was also frequently mentioned as being a great concern to people who use services, their families and carers. A further concern was raised

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that the option could create difficulties for people to cope with changes of service, location and staff.

- 6.8 The option initially proposes states that people using services are able to choose from a wide variety of services to suit their needs, using their personal budgets. People were concerned that, if the option was implemented and other concerns such as transport were not mitigated, then their choice of services could be severely affected.
- 6.9 While people who were involved in the consultation would prefer all centres to remain open, the financial pressures on the Council were recognised. The potential impacts described above would vary dependent on which centre was selected for closure and therefore concerns were raised as to the selection criteria for which site was to close.

7.0 PROPOSED MITIGATION

- 7.1 It is important that due regard is shown to the concerns highlighted throughout this consultation process from people using the services, their families, carers, and our own workforce. 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.

PROPOSED MITIGATION TO IMPACT ON STAFF

- 7.1 The department has already engaged “Skills for Care” to undertake an analysis of the skills required within the workforce and a developmental programme will be implemented.
- 7.2 Extensive support and advice is already available to all Council staff affected by the proposed budget options; and this support will be specifically tailored dependent on the needs of employees.
- 7.3 If appropriate, specialist advice will be sought to ensure that TUPE implications are fully understood and there will be extensive consultation with staff and unions as the Business Plan is developed for potential development of a social enterprise model in the future.

PROPOSED MITIGATION TO IMPACT ON SERVICE USERS

- 7.4 If any part of the service is further developed into an independent social enterprise, or if people using current Day Services elect to purchase other commissioned services using their personal budgets, that the Council retains overall responsibility for the quality of that service.
- 7.5 If people using the Day Centre which is selected for closure wish to continue using directly provided Council day centre services, then every opportunity should be provided to do so, through a fair and accessible

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transport provision. Transition assistance should also be provided for people who are changing services or centres.

- 7.6 If the decision is taken at Council that one large day centre should close, and mental health provision should be consolidated into one site, then the people using these services should be fully consulted and involved in the selection of the sites for closure.

8.0 SUMMARY

- 8.1 The rationale for this proposal of this option is outlined within this report, in that to modernise and make the day services provision from Wirral Council truly fit for purpose then a complete transformation of the physical buildings and services provided is a definite requirement.
- 8.2 While unhappy at the prospect of any sites closing, people using services accept that improvements and investments are needed in the service, and have suggested a number of concerns which should be given due regard in any Council decision.
- 8.3 Therefore, it is felt appropriate that the decision can be taken to close one large day centre and begin the process of consolidating mental health provision to one site, and to further investigate the development of a social enterprise organisation for an improved day services provision, and realise those savings immediately. It is also appropriate to ensure full consultation with people using those services to identify which site(s) should be closed as part of this option.