

Policy: INFORM



Date: 29th January 2014

Transformation and Resources

Title:	Local Audit and Accountability Bill
Accountable Officer:	Joe Blott
Portfolio(s) Affected:	Governance and Improvement
Category:	New Legislation
Synopsis:	This bill will formally abolish the Audit Commission and replace it with a new local audit framework.
Key Points:	The main objectives are to reduce the cost of local audit and improve 'direct democracy' over Council Tax. The latter is achieved through giving local council taxpayers a veto to rises in council tax caused by bodies such as waste disposal authorities and integrated transport authorities. The bill will also cut down on the amount of council-funded newspapers produced.
Further Information:	A Local Government Information Unit briefing is available at: http://www.lgiu.org.uk/briefing/local-audit-and-accountability-bill-overview-and-update/
Implications:	Transformation and Resources will have a role in the development of a new local audit framework. Budget Strategy considerations may also be impacted by the changes to the Council Tax threshold for triggering a referendum.

Title:	Spending Review
Accountable Officer:	Joe Blott
Portfolio(s) Affected:	Finance and Leader of the Council
Category:	Government Announcement
Synopsis:	On 26 June, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, delivered his Spending Review to parliament setting out departmental spending for 2015-16.
Key Points:	<p>Headline figures</p> <p>Total government expenditure for 2015-16 will be £745bn</p> <p>The Chancellor announced that £11.5bn of savings would be found from government budgets in order to continue along Britain's path to deficit reduction, with some £5 billion coming from efficiency savings.</p> <p>Until 2017-18, the total amount of government spending will continue to fall in real terms at the same average rate as today</p> <p>There will be a 1% cap on public sector pay rises. Automatic progression pay to be ended in civil service, schools, hospitals, prisons and the police but not the armed forces</p> <p>Capital spending plans will increase by £3 billion a year from 2015-16</p>

and by £18 billion over the next Parliament.

The Government will continue to protect funding for health and schools in real terms in 2015-16.

The Spending Round announces that the government will, for the first time, introduce a cap on the country's welfare spending from April 2015. The cap will improve spending control, support fiscal consolidation, and ensure that the welfare system remains affordable. This will not include the state pension.

Further Information: The LGA has produced a Future funding outlook for councils from 2010/11 to 2019/20:

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10171/4053260/NEWS-TEMPLATE

Implications: For Wirral, the figures produced by the LGA broadly mirror our own calculations which forecast that we will be required to make savings of between £13.5m and £24m during the period 2015 to 2018. This is on top of the £109m savings the Council has to make between 2012 and 2015.

Title: **Care Bill**

Accountable Officer: Clare Fish

Portfolio(s) Affected: Adult Social Care
Health and Wellbeing

Category: New Legislation

Synopsis: The Care Bill introduces major changes to Social Care sector; emphasising wellbeing, prevention, carers' rights, choice and personalisation.

Key Points: This bill will introduce a cap on the cost of social care, and give carers the legal right to support from their local council. Key changes relate to the way Councils deliver Public Health and the NHS structure as well as the LA role. It will provide protection to people whose care provider goes out of business and give everyone a legal entitlement to a personal care budget, which they can receive as a direct payment to spend as they wish. In light of the issues at Stafford Hospital, the bill will introduce an Ofsted-style rating system for hospitals and care homes and give new powers of intervention to the chief inspector of hospitals. It will create two new public bodies, Health Education England and the Health Research Authority. These will provide additional training and support for health professionals.

Further Information: Details have been released by the NHS of the new better care funds promoting integration between health and social care. An initial proposal is to go to the Health and Wellbeing Board shortly.

NHS Planning Guidance (with Better Care Fund details)

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/bm-item6.pdf>

Further Information: Allocations Paper

<http://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/bm-item7.pdf>

Implications: Four key implications for the Council have been identified in collaboration with DASS:

- How is the cap to be resourced? The cap is likely to drive additional demand from people who would have been self funders. Wirral Council will need to forecast cost of implementation and build into financial projections as well as monitoring additional cost.

- Increasing focus on integration and a fully joined up health and social care system is required.
- Need to respond to new eligibility framework when published, no scope to review eligibility criteria in the short term.
- Safeguarding review of thresholds and need to focus on personalisation and prevention in addition to simply keeping people safe.

Recommendation: Receive the proposals for the Better Care Fund.

Title: **Draft Deregulation Bill**

Accountable Officer: Joe Blott

Portfolio(s) Affected: Finance and Leader of the Council
Central Services

Category: New Legislation

Synopsis: This draft bill lays out how the government intends to reduce the amount of regulation with which businesses, individuals and public bodies have to comply.

Key Points: Measures include exempting from health-and-safety legislation people who are self-employed and whose work poses no risk of harm to other people, and removing the ability of employment tribunals to make wider recommendations in successful discrimination cases, which they were granted in the Equality Act 2010.

Further Information: A Local Government Information Unit briefing is available at:
<http://www.lgiu.org.uk/briefing/draft-deregulation-bill-what-next/>

Implications: In its current form, there may be indirect implications, such as in the area of procurement, that the Local Authority may wish to explore as the Bill is further debated and refined. There will also be direct implications in relation to employment tribunals.

Further Information:

Contact: Wirral Council Policy Unit
Telephone: 0151 691 8030
Email: policy@wirral.gov.uk