

# Chief Executive's Budget Proposals Future Council Project

<b>Public Consultation Feedback</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Managing Demand</b>
<b>Definition</b>	We will reduce the demand and subsequently the cost of specialist, substantial services through empowering people and communities to help themselves.

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### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The future plans and budget proposal within the change theme of 'Managing Demand' are presented for Members within this report. Also presented is the quantitative feedback received through the consultation questionnaire and a summary of the main themes emerging through qualitative feedback, from sources such as the consultation questionnaire, meetings with groups and letters, emails and other communications sent directly into the consultation process.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Consultees were provided a range of information detailing the background, level of savings, potential impact and methods of mitigating any potential negative impact for each individual option. This information included:

- **Questionnaire:** The questionnaire provided a summary of each option and provided the opportunity for respondents to select one of four choices indicating their opinion on the option.
- **Consultation Pack:** One document containing information on the change themes and all associated budget proposals was produced and made available at Council buildings and on the website.
- **Summary Paper:** Four summary papers (one per change theme) were produced and were available online and through Council buildings. These papers provided a summary of each option, including the level of savings involved and some background information.
- **Business Cases:** These papers 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.

2.2 The consultation questionnaire and associated consultation pack was made available in Easy Read, and distributed widely through Council and voluntary, community and faith sector networks. Further work was done to ensure accessibility including promotion through the network of LCD screens in Council facilities, which further explained the context behind the budget process and provided information on how to complete the questionnaire.

2.3 Within the consultation documents, residents were provided with an explanation of what each change theme meant in practice – and what future plans and projects would be delivered in the coming years. They were then provided the opportunity to comment on those proposals and give an indication on whether they were appropriate and if they would suggest any changes.

2.4 Residents were then provided with the specific, immediate budget proposals put forward by the Chief Executive. Residents were provided

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with an explanation of the impact of the option and the associated saving and requested to indicate if they supported the implementation of the option.

### **3.0 WE CONSULTED ON THE FOLLOWING FUTURE PLANS**

**3.1** In relation to 'Managing Demand', residents were provided the following explanation of the change theme on which they were requested to provide feedback and comments.

"We will reduce the demand and subsequently the cost of specialist, substantial services through empowering people and communities to help themselves. We will place a major emphasis in the future on working with people, and communities, to both improve their aspirations and achievements and also limit the resources needed for costly, specialist services. We will also focus on improving people's living situations, aspirations and general family life across a whole range of areas - reducing the demand on Council services, enabling the money saved to be better invested elsewhere.

This will involve a complete redesign of the way outcomes are achieved for children, young people and vulnerable adults in Wirral. The focus will be on increasing independence, and reducing demand on Council resources, as well as joining up our work with partners, such as the NHS – which will provide major savings but also a more integrated service for people receiving support.

We are in the process of reviewing our entire approach to delivering both children's and adults' social care – making sure we tackle potential problems early, before they require costly, specialist support services. We will place more emphasis, and resources, into services for early intervention and prevention – making sure people stay independent for longer and that specialist services are needed less. We will work particularly with our younger people to increase their independence through raising their aspirations and ambitions for the future.

We will also implement a full programme of behaviour change activity, targeted at problem issues in the borough which drain significant public resources sometimes unnecessarily. This will focus on reducing issues such as litter, dog fouling, criminal damage such as graffiti and other forms of vandalism such as fly tipping."

### **4.0 FEEDBACK RECEIVED**

**4.1** Respondents were again generally supportive of the broad policy in this area. Of particular interest were issues such as litter, dog fouling, criminal damage and fly tipping. Respondents were keen to see the Council work with communities to develop solutions to tackle these issues.

**4.2** Respondents were also supportive of the principle of promoting independence, and focussing on early intervention and absolutely

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understood the social, health and financial benefits. Respondents did highlight concerns that focussing on early intervention and independence should not lead to vulnerable people being abandoned and unnecessarily losing care or support.

- 4.3 Further concerns were highlighted in relation to communities being empowered to develop and deliver their own solutions to local issues. Respondents were generally supportive of this approach in principle, but were concerned that without specialist support and advice from the Council this approach would be difficult to deliver successfully.

### 5.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUDGET PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Residents were then provided with the budget proposals from the Chief Executive in this area to comment on. These proposals are provided below together with the public feedback which has been received.

#### **Option: Preventative Maintenance**

<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
570	-	570

The vast majority of the funding the Council uses to maintain highways comes in the form of grants from national government. Wirral is one of only a few Councils in the country to put extra, local money into this fund to carry out 'preventative' work, across both our highways and our parks. This option would see us removing this additional investment, and focussing our maintenance work where there is a safety implication.

If non-essential maintenance to highways and coastal infrastructure is a priority for the community, then Constituency Committees could include it in their budget priorities. Increasing volunteer involvement in the maintenance of infrastructure, subject to safe systems of work, might also allow continued maintenance of the appearance of street furniture, for example, by painting of railings or restoration of highway seats.

Repairs to damage caused by vehicle collisions or vandalism represent a significant part of the maintenance budget. The Council needs to recover more of these costs and a campaign encouraging public support in identifying those causing the damage could help and result in greater funding being available for other maintenance or further savings.

#### ***Public Feedback***

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly agree	7.9%	421
Agree	27.8%	1479
Neither agree nor disagree	15.7%	833

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Disagree	30.0%	1591
Strongly disagree	18.6%	988

### **Option: School Crossing Patrols**

<b>15/16</b>	<b>16/17</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
90	65	155

Last year, the Council worked alongside all schools in the borough in an effort to share the costs of providing school crossing patrols. Only a few schools agreed to pay towards their costs. Therefore, this option would review the school crossing patrols which are currently at 47 sites across the borough where there is already a pedestrian, pelican or puffin crossing in place. Initial estimates that out of those 47 sites, a total of 41 school crossing patrols would be removed. We believe that, due to the crossing facilities which are in place 24 hours a day, the demand and requirement for a school crossing patrol is greatly reduced. However, before this option is implemented, a full risk assessment will be completed on every crossing site.

Surveys conducted in 2012 and 2013 indicate that school crossing patrols assist more than 20,000 people daily across the borough. Over 11,000 people use school crossing patrol sites at light controlled crossing points daily. Additional road safety education and training will be undertaken in schools on the use of light controlled crossings to mitigate the removal of any crossing patrol. If patrols are to be removed, schools may wish to continue the service by paying to provide a patrol at that site. Contact would be made with schools before any patrols are removed.

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<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly agree	19.3%	1039
Agree	36.4%	1958
Neither agree nor disagree	10.0%	536
Disagree	16.3%	877
Strongly disagree	18.0%	966

A petition relating to a specific school crossing patrol in New Ferry was reported to Council in October, which is also referenced in the substantive report. A number of letters from parents were also received by the School Crossing Patrol team which were considered as part of the consultation process.