

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure Adult Social Care (ASC) care home charges		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England		8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)													
Proposal:	To increase how much we charge for a bed, as detailed below for each home. This is above the normal annual inflationary rate (4.6% in 2024/25).																
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>WBC care home</th> <th>Proposed charge per week</th> <th>Proposed % increase</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Birchwood</td> <td>£1,209.20</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Notrees</td> <td>£1,068.10</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>*Willows Edge</td> <td>£1,068.10</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					WBC care home	Proposed charge per week	Proposed % increase	Birchwood	£1,209.20	20%	Notrees	£1,068.10	10%	*Willows Edge	£1,068.10	10%
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<p><i>*Please note: Willows Edge Care Home is subject to another budget proposal to either close or find an alternative provider to run it.</i></p> <p>Following the consultation, if the decision is taken to close the home, this income will be lost. If an alternative provider is found, then the charge may be different than proposed here.</p>																	
Total budget 2023/24:	£2,009,260	Initial expected income 2024/25:	£20,000	Expected income 2024/25:	£20,000												
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 54 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 - A user of the service • 48 - A resident of West Berkshire • 0 - A visitor to West Berkshire • 0 - A West Berkshire business owner • 4 - Employed by a West Berkshire business • 3 - Employed by West Berkshire Council • 3 - A Parish/Town Councillor 																

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 - A District Councillor • 0 - A partner organisation • 1 - A West Berkshire Council service provider • 1 - Other <p>We also received no petitions.</p>		
Key issues raised:	<p>The general view from the respondents was that it was appropriate to increase the fees for those individuals who could pay.</p> <p>There was a lack of understanding from some respondents as to how individuals are financial assessed and how much most individuals contribute towards their care.</p>		
Equality issues:	No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Outsource all of the homes	<p>There is another proposal considering the closure or outsourcing of Willows Edge and Notrees was subject to consultation a couple of years ago and it was decided to retain it.</p> <p>Adult Social Care is currently reviewing its Care Strategy and its Market Position Statement.</p>	
	Lobby government to make significant changes to the system	This is ongoing and the recent Charging Reforms have been paused by central government until October 2025	
	Give plenty of notice of the change	If the proposal goes ahead then individuals will be given 4 weeks notice of the change.	

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Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Review all contracts	Contracts are regularly reviewed when they are due to renewal.	
	Close the 3 day centres owned by the Council	These 3 day centres are not over spending and do generate an income for the Council.	
	Sell all 3 care homes	There is another proposal considering the closure or outsourcing of Willows Edge and Notrees was subject to consultation a couple of years ago and it was decided to retain it. Adult Social Care is currently reviewing its Care Strategy and its Market Position Statement.	
	Review all of the nice to have proposed spending	All spending is currently being reviewed but some projects are capital or grant funded not revenue funded.	
	Reduce agency staff	We are reducing agency staff wherever possible but in some areas like the care homes we do have to use agency staff to provide cover sometimes.	
	Replace the Council's fossil fuel vehicles with electric ones	This is happening as and when vehicles are due for replacement.	
	Eliminate transport subsidies for everyone but pensioners	Reducing spend on community transport is one of the other proposals being considered.	
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Sell the old Newbury Day centre site	A review of all Council owned assets is taking place.	

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	Charge for bin replacement	We're not convinced it's worth it at the moment, as we don't think it will generate a significant amount of revenue (particularly given the effort and investment required to set it up) and it can be seen as counterintuitive. Even so, we have started to look at it in more detail recently given the financial situation the Council finds itself.	
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	<p>It is appropriate to increase the fees for those individuals who can pay the full cost and other Local Authorities that use our care homes.</p> <p>The recommendation is to proceed with this proposal.</p>		

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