

## ADULT SOCIAL CARE FAIRER CHARGING

Report By: Director of Adult and Community Services

### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

1. To inform the Committee of the outcomes of the recent public consultation on the Fairer Charging for non-residential Social Services recommendations made by Cabinet in June 2007. The report also recommends revisions to the recommendations made in June following the consultation.

### Financial implications

2. The proposals in this report will generate significant additional income for the Council as set out in Appendix A.

### Background

3. Cabinet approved a number of changes to the Council's Fairer Charging Policy on June 7th 2007, as reported to this Committee on 22nd June. These are set out in Appendix A to this report. The one change to the proposals put to Cabinet was the reduction in the proposed rate for day care services to £7.30 per hour.
4. The recommendations from this report have been the subject of extensive public consultation during the summer. This has included:
  - A telephone hotline;
  - Formal meetings and drop in sessions in the market towns and Hereford;
  - A meeting for service providers in Hereford;
  - E-mail and letter correspondence.
5. The main messages arising from the consultation are summarised as follows:
  - By far the most significant concerns were in regard to the increase in day centre fees from £2.90 to £7.30;
  - A concern was raised that by increasing charges people will move further away from community care services and this will accelerate a decline in health and hence residential nursing care.
6. Other concerns were raised in regard to:
  - Charging people for two care assistants instead of just one, where two were required;

- The impact of including 100% of occupational pensions in the financial assessment on people's income and in particular the perceived inequity of this when people have been prudent in making such pension provision;
  - The value for money received from some care service providers;
  - There was an understanding that this was largely a national problem in regard to the funding and not because Herefordshire were not committed to social care services.
7. All the concerns raised by the consultees have been heard and responded to verbally in the meetings or by letter and e-mail. The most significant have been around the provision of day care and Cabinet will need to decide how they wish to respond to these. There are a number of factors which are pertinent in coming to a decision on this issue:
- The current provision of day care is largely traditional and buildings-based and does not meet the needs of either the Council or many service users. Whilst appreciating that it provides a valuable social function to many people, new, low level services are being developed in the community which provide a more flexible approach to day opportunities for older people as part of the wider Prevention agenda;
  - Current day centre provision can be very expensive in terms of costs per day for each service user. This is largely due to some day centres having low attendance whilst retaining fixed contractual costs;
  - The decision cannot be made purely for financial reasons. Some service users will stop attending day centres because of the increase in the charge to £7.30. This becomes a concern to Social Care where the service was provided as part of a formal care package and alternative provision is not made available in a relatively short time scale.
8. Given the level of concern during the consultation on day centre fees, an alternative option is proposed to reduce further the increase in the day centre fee to £4 per session (from the current £2.90 charge). This will then be reviewed in March 2009 in light of the proposals for a new pattern of day opportunities for older people. The Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing Scrutiny Committee is commencing a review of day care provision, which could confirm further changes.
9. In regard to the remaining changes to Fairer Charging contained in the June Cabinet report it is recommended that these remain, whilst at the same time recognising that they will have a financial impact on a minority of service users. This analysis was not available in June, however officers have been able to estimate this impact as below.

**Table 1**

10. The changes on occupational pensions and tariff income will have a combined impact on 262 service users as follows:

12 people > £100 per week
32 people > £50 per week and < £100 per week
43 people > £30 per week and < £50 per week
36 people > £20 per week and < £30 per week
139 people < £20 per week

11. The reasons set out in the June report are still valid and the Council needs to adopt a revised and equitable Fairer Charging structure in order to sustain care services in to the future.
12. Failure to implement the recommendations from the 9 June Cabinet report will seriously jeopardise the ability of Adult Social Care to sustain and improve vital care services to vulnerable people in Herefordshire. Demographic growth in older people in particular is placing significant pressure on social care budgets and an equitable charging system for non-residential services is an absolute requirement to address this challenge.
13. The major risk to the Council in implementing this structure is the financial impact this may have on some individual service users. Alternative service provision is being actively developed in lower level community based services which will not only prove to be more cost effective, but will also ensure that individual needs are more closely met.

### **Recommendations to Cabinet**

14. Appendix A contains the initial proposals approved at Cabinet in June this year for public consultation. It is recommended that these are now finally approved with the option to reduce the proposed charge for day care from £7.30 to £4 per session. This will be reviewed in June 2009. These recommendations will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 11th October, 2007

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the report be noted, subject to any comments the Committee wishes to submit to Cabinet.**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Cabinet Report on Fairer Charging June 9th 2007