

## **Chief Executive's Budget Proposal**

### **OPTION: Pest Control**

<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>	<b>£000s</b>
65	-	65

### **SUMMARY OF OPTION**

This option proposes, alongside some staffing changes, a 10% increase in charges for all domestic and commercial services provided by Environmental Health, and the introduction of a charge for the element of the Pest Control service related to rats and cockroaches.

Under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 the Local Authority has a duty to take such steps as may be necessary to secure so far as practicable that their district is kept free from rats and mice. The exact definition of this duty is not clear. However, Wirral introducing a charge for rats does align with a number of other Local Authorities. The proposed charge of £25 being introduced for rats offers value when compared to commercial charges by the larger private companies. However, a review of the information on the website would be undertaken to ensure the advice being provided is clear on what action can be taken to help prevent infestations by pests such as rats and mice.

The introduction of the charge for rats and the commercialisation of the service reduces the competitive impact of the Council on private pest control firms that operate within Wirral. There are a number of private businesses which operate in Wirral that offer pest control services and a number of well known DIY stores located in Wirral that sell a range of products that can be used to control the common pest which Wirral Council currently treat. If this budget option was approved the Call Centre staff would be trained to provide general advice on where to go to get advice on home treatments and what alternative private pest control companies operate in Wirral.

### **IMPACT ON RESIDENTS**

The main implication for this budget option is the introduction of the charge for rats. With regard to the charge for rats: this charge is still being subsidised and the success of the commercial services will ensure that this subsidy is sustainable. Service users who are dissatisfied with the increased charges could choose to self treat or opt to use the wide range of commercial businesses, large and small, that offer pest control services in Wirral. As and

when in-house expert advice is required that cannot be provided by our existing officers, expertise would have to be sought externally through our network of contacts or bought in, as required.

Local businesses may benefit from the review of this service as the Local Authority will be competing on a more commercial basis with reduced subsidies.

#### **IMPACT ON PARTNERS**

No direct implications.

#### **IMPACT ON COMMUNITY, VOLUNTARY AND FAITH SECTOR**

No direct implications.