

## Budget Consultation 2025-26

**Business Cases** 

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# Adult Social Care and All-Age Commissioning Directorate

**Business Cases** 

Directorate / Division	Adult Social Care and All Age Commissioning / Adult Social Care
Reference and Title	ASC2526-A - Annual Administration Charge - Adult Social Care Self Funders (setting up fee and annual charge)
Which priority is impacted by this proposal	Fairer - Tackling inequality and improving life chances for everyone

Service Context	The Adults Brokerage Team source care and support for adults over the age of 18 who have been assessed as needing care and support under the Care Act, this includes Adults who are not eligible for financial support from the City Council and fund their care costs themselves.
Cost Information (if applicable)	N/A
Demand (if applicable)	There are currently 300 self-funders and 75 individuals on a deferred payment arrangement, accessing homecare via the Brokerage Service.

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Year	£'000s
2025/26	75
2026/27	75
2027/28	75
2028/29	75
2029/30	75

Description of Option (and specifically, how the saving will be made)	The Charging Policy for Non-Residential, approved at April 2024 Cabinet, makes provision for the City Council to charge self-funders for arranging their care.  The intention is to introduce a charge for setting up the care and an ongoing maintenance charge for self-funders who wish to utilise the City Councils Brokerage Service.  The one off 'set up' charge will be £240.00  The 'maintenance charge' will be £185.00 p/a (£3.50 p/w)  The set-up cost will only be applied to new self-funders following a period of engagement.
Options / Alternatives	Do nothing - continue to source care and support for self-funders free of charge.

Impact	Self-funders who make use of the City Council's Brokerage Service benefit from receiving their care and support from the Councils commissioned providers. This ensures provision from providers who are subject to regular quality assurance, a point of escalation should any issues arise and rates which are often considerably lower than the rates charged by care providers for private clients.
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Directorate / Division	Adult Social Care and All-Age Commissioning / Adult Social Care
Reference and Title	ASC2526-B - Front Door Strengths - Adult Social Care - Reduce demand for formal assessments and support plans through front door strengths-based approach.
Which priority is impacted by this proposal	Healthier - Creating a healthier standard of living for all our citizens

Service Context	Care Act Service Provisions to meet identified eligible needs.
Cost Information (if applicable)	N/A
Demand (if applicable)	N/A

Year	£'000s
2025/26	230
2026/27	230
2027/28	230
2028/29	230
2029/30	230

Description of Option (and specifically, how the saving will be made)	The Front Door will provide a strengths-based approach to social work practice, focusing on strengths and capacities rather than deficits of individuals. From this perspective there will be a higher outcome of support from recognising the other mechanisms within the persons support network and community, reducing the need for formal Care Act 2014 assessment.
	It is estimated 175 first contact reviews need to be carried out between April and September in 2025.  Maximising the number of people who could be supported via mechanisms within their individual support network and community, would help to mitigate any increase in demand.
	The saving will be recognised from tracking the reduction in care packages as a result of lower rate of Care Act assessments completed. Resulting in lower growth requirements within domiciliary care

	The net effect of adopting a strengths and capacities approach at the Front Door would result in a saving on £230k.
Options / Alternatives	N/A
Impact	The activity of the Front Door team is meeting our duties under the Care Act 2014, while promoting the independence and strengths of our people within the City. This includes improved advice and guidance, digital solutions and community lounges work. The impact of this will be increased independence for the person, increased capacity in the care market and the financial impact outlined above.

Directorate / Division	Adult Social Care and All-Age Commissioning / Commissioning
Reference and Title	ASC2526-C - Extra Care Housing
Which priority is impacted by this proposal	Enabling - Used for no associated priority or for cost codes which fall into more than one priority

Service Context	The City Council currently commission care and support for people over 55 in 8 Extra Care Housing schemes.  Extra care housing (ECH) offers innovative ways of supporting people to live independently for as long as possible. It gives people the security and privacy of a home of your own, a range of facilities on the premises and access to 24-hour care and support services, if needed.
	The level of care provided can be increased or decreased to match people's individuals needs as they change and staff can respond immediately if there is an urgent need for assistance.
	Each scheme has an 'onsite' home care provider, who are contracted to provide all the onsite care and support, for people with assessed, eligible care needs residing in the schemes.
	Due to historic staffing issues within the home care market, some care has been delivered by an alternative home care provider. Currently there are 13 different providers operating across the 8 ECH schemes, with up to 8 different providers' entering a scheme on a daily basis.
	The 'onsite' providers are paid an average hourly rate of £20.68, compared to an hourly rate of £22.80 being paid to the alternative care providers.
	There are limited vacancies in the existing schemes, which often results in individuals being placed in a residential care home, rather than their preferred choice of ECH and at increased costs to the City Council.
	There are already existing savings in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for Extra Care Housing (ref VS06-2122) Reduction in Residential and Nursing in favour of Extra Care (Back Office Transformation).
Cost Information (if applicable)	N/A
Demand (if applicable)	N/A
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Year	£'000s
2025/26	220
2026/27	220
2027/28	220
2028/29	220
2029/30	220

Description of Option (and specifically, how the saving will be made)	The homecare market is no longer struggling to recruit and retain staff and very few people are waiting for care at any one time. This is illustrated by the report in local media (Sentinel, 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2024) that Stoke-on-Trent residents do not need to wait for care at home upon discharge from hospital.
	In order to truly deliver an extra care housing model, where all care is delivered by one home care provider and where residents and providers get to know each other and staff can monitor resident's day to day wellbeing, it is proposed all 'external' care provision is transferred over to the 'onsite' provider. Having one provider reduces the number of different providers coming in and out of the Extra Care provision and is more efficient, reducing the spend on domiciliary care budgets.
	To reduce the reliance of residential care beds and to ensure our residents remain as independent as possible, for as long as possible, the City Council needs to make best use of vacancies in existing ECH schemes and new developments as they become available.
	By applying the principles of placing people in the least restrictive accommodation and at best value for the City Council, the impact would be seen in a reduction in spend against the residential care budgets.
Options / Alternatives	Do nothing, however this will not achieve any savings or make best use of the ECH provision being developed in the City.
Impact	This work will make best use of new Extra Care Housing developments as they become available. This in turn will reduce the reliance on residential care and promote independence.  These proposals will ensure that current Extra Care Housing care and support provision remains financially viable and a suitable alternative.

# Public Health, Protection and Wellbeing Directorate

### **Business Cases**

Directorate / Division	Public Health, Protection and Wellbeing / Leisure and Wellbeing Services, and Public Protection
Reference and Title	PHLTH2526-A - Income Generation across Leisure and Wellbeing Services and Public Protection
Which priority is impacted by this proposal	Healthier - Creating a healthier standard of living for all our citizens

Service Context	The Leisure and Wellbeing service is estimated to
	generate circa £4.98m of earned income in 2024/25. These proposals focus on plans to increase income, thus moving the service towards a position of full cost recovery.
	The Pest Control Service in Public Protection generates circa £151k of earned income and there are opportunities to increase this.
Cost Information (if applicable)	N/A
Demand (if applicable)	Included in Description of Option below

#### Saving

Year	£'000s
2025/26	297
2026/27	297
2027/28	297
2028/29	297
2029/30	297

### Description of Option

(and specifically, how the saving will be made) This proposal includes a number of proposed price increases (at inflation and above inflation) and service growth.

#### **Leisure and Wellbeing Services**:

Description	£'000	Notes
Inflationary Uplift (at 3%)	(110)	3% on appropriate income budgets.
Price Increases above Inflation		
Gymnastics lessons & play sessions (Dimensions)	(159)	Proposed price increase of £4.00 per hour. Enables and includes an improved daytime offer and improved ratio of staff to children.

Dimensions  compared to April 2 £5.00 Junior at 01/0 be excluded.  Activity Growth  Gym memberships  (281) Based on 5,900 me (number at Sept 20 inflation uplift included infl	1.00 per swim at Dimensions 2024 prices (£6.60 Adult and 04/2024). Specific groups will embers from 01/04/2025 124; 5,750). Standard (3%) ded in top line above.		
Gym memberships  (281) Based on 5,900 me (number at Sept 20 inflation uplift included inflation	024; 5,750). Standard (3%)		
Sub Total Less Re-basing of café bars Increased expected income in  (number at Sept 20 inflation uplift includ	024; 5,750). Standard (3%)		
Less Re-basing of café bars  Increased expected income in  367			
Re-basing of café bars 110 Dimensions (£80k) Increased expected income in 367			
Increased expected income in 367			
	and Fenton Manor (£30k)		
2020/20 2000 200900			
Total Net Saving (287)			
pest treatments for domestic customers including business customers. There are opportunities in the number of customers and to increase some current inflation level. A nominal expected incombe applied.	this market to increase prices above the me target of <b>£10k</b> will		
discounted because it does not allow the service	There is the option to leave prices unchanged. However, this was discounted because it does not allow the service to keep pace with inflationary increases on its expenditure or close the current gap between gross expenditure and gross income.		
result of price rises is not always clear cut. Howe has been given to competitor pricing, current der commercial environment in which the service op Public Impact – In broad terms it is felt that the ir Council to keep services open and maintain a go	Business Impact - Implications on changing demand for services as a result of price rises is not always clear cut. However, due consideration has been given to competitor pricing, current demand and the commercial environment in which the service operates.  Public Impact – In broad terms it is felt that the increases will allow the Council to keep services open and maintain a good standard of leisure offer within the City which is accessible to the majority of our residents, both geographically and economically.		

Directorate / Division	Public Health, Protection and Wellbeing / Leisure and Wellbeing Services
Reference and Title	PHLTH2526-B - Expenditure Savings via transfer of New Horizons Leisure to Ormiston Academy Trust.
Which priority is impacted by this proposal	Healthier - Creating a healthier standard of living for all our citizens

Service Context	Ormiston Academy Trust (OAT) are a non-profit multi– academy trust that oversees 40 schools, including Ormiston Horizon Academy. New Horizons Leisure Centre is the leisure facility onsite.  New Horizons Leisure Centre was originally built in the 1960s. In 2006 the leisure centre underwent refurbishment through funding obtained from the Big Lottery (BL). The BL funding agreement requires that the leisure centre must operate as a facility for both the local community and education provision, for a period of at least 20 years, expiring on 13 May 2029 (Clawback Period). The agreement with BL states that failure to operate any of the Leisure Facilities during this Clawback Period, may result
	in the full or partial repayment of the BL Funding.  Since 2009 the leisure centre has been managed by the city council's in-house Leisure and Wellbeing Service with a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place with the academy. This states that OAT can utilise the leisure facilities for educational purposes. Between 2019-2023 the city council invested £720k on several energy efficiency measures for the site, as part of a wider carbon-reduction exercise implemented across the city council's estate.
	During the academic year, the centre offers a dual-use functionality, whereby the sports hall and downstairs changing areas accommodate Ormiston Horizon Academy's physical education provision, and the poolside and upstairs changing rooms facilitate the city council's education swimming lesson service.
	During evenings and weekends the centre is operated by the city council's Leisure and Wellbeing Services for swimming lessons, private club hire and community use. Outside of term time, New Horizons is a host venue for school holiday programmes which are mostly funded by the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) and Staffordshire Police Activity and Community Enterprise (SPACE) schemes.
Cost Information (if applicable)	N/A

Demand (if applicable)	N/A

#### Saving

Year	£'000s
2025/26	69
2026/27	69
2027/28	69
2028/29	69
2029/30	69

### **Description of Option** (and specifically, how the saving will be made)

This proposal involves a collaborative approach to the management model of New Horizons Leisure Centre in partnership with Ormiston Academy Trust (OAT) via a long-term lease, supported with a robust Community Use Agreement. Furthermore, it involves the planned introduction of a service level agreement (SLA) for Leisure and Wellbeing Services (LWS) to become a regular hirer of the swimming pool to continue provision of a refined swimming lesson and community public swim offer.

As with many local authority leisure facilities, the outdated design and age of the building and equipment results in increasing costs to maintain and safely operate the facility. The centre will require significant future capital investment to extend its commercial lifespan. This option would enable the city council to continue delivering a refined private and education swimming lessons programme, community swimming sessions and school holiday provisions <a href="whitst-removing the city council's financial liability for the physical building, its assets, and utilities.">whilst</a>

Since 2022, OAT have expressed their aspiration to take over the management of New Horizons Leisure Centre, to ensure the Academy is in a more secure position to develop their future educational sports programme and to ensure that the site and its facilities remain open for pupils, families, and the wider community. The academy is committed to ensuring the facilities remain available for community use, as they currently demonstrate with the onsite artificial grass pitch and across the wider OAT estate.

The potential net saving from setting up the long-term lease is £69k (£191k expenditure saving and £122k income reduction).

Staff at New Horizons will re-locate to other vacant posts within the Leisure and Wellbeing Service.

Options / Alternatives	The option to retain the status quo was considered. However, the time was considered right by all parties to pursue the proposed course of action.
Impact	Business Impact – on going annual revenue savings for the City Council. Staff currently employed at the leisure centre will either continue to deliver services from site or relocate to our other centres.
	Public Impact – importantly the proposal retains the facilities for community use, under the terms of the agreement. This includes a community swimming offer as well as allowing the Council to maintain the school swimming service offered to local schools and private swimming lessons.

Directorate / Division	Public Health, Protection and Wellbeing / Bereavement Care Service
Reference and Title	PHLTH2526-C - New service. Development of a Pet Garden of Remembrance and sale of pet memorialisation items for the garden and the home.
Which priority is impacted by this proposal	Enabling - Used for no associated priority or for cost codes which fall into more than one priority

Service Context	Additional income through the development of a Garden of Remembrance and memorial product range for pets.  The area will be developed at Carmountside Cemetery in Milton in an area of the site which is unsuitable for the
	burial of human remains.  The development will be subject to the necessary consent from the Environment Agency and other government bodies to approve the proposal.
	Owners who have already had their pets cremated will be able to have their cremation ashes strewn on the new garden of remembrance. It is hoped that there will be additional options for above ground niche type placement subject to the availability of suitable products in the market place. It is also envisaged to develop a range of memorialisation products for animals which will be available for both home use and at the cemetery.
	Memorialisation in the cemetery will be based on a lease period in the hope that further income will be generated through lease renewals in the future. Marketing will rely on assistance from the Comms Team to maximise potential to raise revenue from products.
Cost Information (if applicable)	<b>Grounds maintenance</b> – the area will require maintaining which, whilst putting pressure on the existing grounds team, can be covered within existing resources.
	<b>Development Costs</b> – Design and landscaping will be undertaken internally by the BCS development team. However, features and materials required for the construction will be necessary at market cost.
	Re-sale Items – The business model shows there is initial outlay for memorialisation items that is re-cooped over time when leased. Financial returns are not significant at first, but increase as a result of re-sales and lease renewals in line with standard practice

Demand (if applicable)	Following the inception of the idea, benchmarking has been undertaken with other authorities who provide a similar service.
	Sandwell MBC offer pet interment in addition to cremation ashes placements. Uptake has not matched the initial projections and however demand remains steady.
	Bath and North East Somerset Council report the same low-level demand. Owners can keep their pet remains at home or dispose of them in their own gardens.
	Memorialisation products are readily available on line and at veterinary surgeries. It is possible that demand will not repay the investment and on- going maintenance costs to facilitate the scheme. This will be monitored and managed.

Year	£'000s
2025/26	3
2026/27	3
2027/28	3
2028/29	3
2029/30	3

Description of Option (and specifically, how the saving will be made)	Charges for scattering and placement of cremated pet ashes. Memorialisation items for the garden and the home market
Options / Alternatives	The alternative option remains not to introduce this new service.
Impact	Business Impact - Benchmarking with other authorities providing a similar service demonstrates a low but steady level of demand.
	Public Impact – The area will be developed at Carmountside Cemetery in a segregated area of the site which is unsuitable for the burial of human remains.

# Housing, Regeneration and Operations Directorate

**Business Cases** 

Directorate / Division	Housing Regeneration and Operations / Operations and Regulatory Services
Reference and Title	HRO2526-A - Review and optimise indoor market provision to stimulate economic growth
Which priority is impacted by this proposal	Wealthier - Reducing hardship and enabling greater shared prosperity

Service Context	The City Council operate 4 markets in various towns. In order to function they employ cleaners and external security.
Cost Information (if applicable)	N/A
Demand (if applicable)	The markets function has been subject to transformation review. An operational plan is in place for each market to build on the successful work completed during 2024/25. Demand has increased across all sites.

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Year	£'000s
2025/26	35
2026/27	35
2027/28	35
2028/29	35
2029/30	35

Description of Option (and specifically, how the saving will be made)	Following a review of the roles and responsibilities of our market cleaners and their current job descriptions, the creation of a new role will provide a more versatile approach to the varied requirements of the market facility management support role.
	There is currently a requirement for a security guard in each market as well as an appropriate number of cleansing staff. The creation of these new posts will provide efficiencies and a more flexible approach to facilities management. These posts will be subject to formal job evaluation and are expected to have an indicative grade of Level 5. The saving is made by removal of the external security contract and is net of any salary increase.
Options / Alternatives	Do nothing – no saving

The experience of the public using the markets will improve. This will result in a more flexible facilities management approach within markets provision.

Directorate / Division	Housing Regeneration and Operations / Operations and Regulatory Services
Reference and Title	HRO2526-B - Partnership working with local charities to improve recycling rates
Which priority is impacted by this proposal	Cleaner - Working together to clean up our city and our communities

Service Context	Bulky waste collections are currently operated entirely inhouse and are subsidised.  The service is not financially self-sustainable and is not statutory. Residents utilise an on-line book and pay system
Cost Information (if applicable)	and staff collect and dispose of items by appointment.  N/A
Demand (if applicable)	Demand for bulky waste collections is stagnant. Evidence has shown that increasing the charge reduces demand.

Year	£'000s
2025/26	20
2026/27	20
2027/28	20
2028/29	20
2029/30	20

Description of Option (and specifically, how the saving will be made)	Our proposal is to develop a partnership approach with an external provider, likely a local charity, to support existing bulky waste collections.
	We will co-deliver the bulky waste service via a service level agreement which will allow charities to collect and where appropriate re-use furniture items. This will therefore reduce associated disposal costs to the council and increase the opportunity to reuse unwanted items in line with the waste hierarchy.
	The council will continue to provide bulky waste collections for white goods and other items not suitable for re-use. Signposting to our successful partner will be via the City Council website.

		ncluding bulky items is ites from January 202	_
Options / Alternatives	Increase bulky waste collection charges  Benchmarking:		
	Local Authority	No. of Items	Charge £
	Stoke	1-5	£40 (£8 per additional item)
	Stafford	Up to 3	£54 (£11 per additional item)
	Moorlands	1-3 4-6 7-9	£44.50 £71.00 £88.00
	Cheshire East	1-3 4-6	£47.88 £95.14
	Newcastle under Lyme	No Service Offered	
	previous years ar considered as an alternative) mode However, an incre	s been given to increand this option has once alternative proposal. Als could be adopted.	e again been Any of the above (or ed to bulky waste
	and therefore a hi subsequently set in charge reduces	s with an expectation or igher revenue generat for the service. Conve s demand for the servict d to pursue this option	ion target is rsely, any increase ce. It is therefore
Impact	amount of waste. local charity to co	the amount of recyclir Furniture collections of llect whilst the Counci ovision for all other ite	can be diverted to a I maintains the

Directorate / Division	Housing Regeneration and Operations / Operations and Regulatory Services
Reference and Title	HRO2526-C - Weedkilling service to be delivered within Service Level Agreement through Greenspace Team
Which priority is impacted by this proposal	Greener - Conserving our environment and living more sustainably

Service Context	The cities adopted highways are currently applied with herbicide approx. twice a year from April to October by a dedicated team consisting of x1 team leader and 3.6 operatives utilising 4 quad bikes and knap sacks. The team also apply herbicide to Japanese Knotweed and remove detritus/silt build up from highway traffic islands that the mechanical sweepers are not able to access.
Cost Information (if applicable)	N/A
Demand (if applicable)	Weedkilling is carried out in accordance with an agreed service level standard of two applications each year (weather dependent). This current standard still generates a significant number of complaints each year.

Year	£'000s
2025/26	40
2026/27	40
2027/28	40
2028/29	40
2029/30	40

Description of Option (and specifically, how the saving will be made)	Delete 1 post leaving 3.6 posts. The quad bikes and equipment will be dispersed into the existing grounds teams North and South. This will enable weedkilling to be completed across the City in accordance with the existing Service Level Agreement and as part of our Greenspace Teams.
Options / Alternatives	We continue to look for further efficiencies and wherever possible enhanced performance within our services.  We are currently exploring the introduction of a mechanised process to support the weedkilling service. Retro-fit sprayers are now available to attach to vehicles such as road sweepers, to essentially create a dual-

	purpose machine and therefore allow for further service improvement. Costings are being developed and an invest to save proposal will be drafted.
Impact	The service level agreement currently in place for weedkilling across the City will be maintained.

Directorate / Division	Housing Regeneration and Operations / Operations and Regulatory Services
Reference and Title	HRO2526-D - Smart streets - model of responsive streetlighting provision. Dimming of streetlights where it is practical and safe to do so.
Which priority is impacted by this proposal	Safer - Building empowered communities, safe from the threat of harm

Service Context	The street lighting service provides essential infrastructure to illuminate the city between dusk and dawn.
Cost Information (if applicable)	N/A
Demand (if applicable)	N/A

Year	£'000s
2025/26	100
2026/27	100
2027/28	100
2028/29	100
2029/30	100

Description of Option (and specifically, how the saving will be made)	Due to rising energy costs, environmental sustainability goals, and advancements in street lighting technology, the council is assessing opportunities to optimise lighting schedules through the introduction of part-night lighting by dimming.
	Transitioning to a part-night lighting model, where selected streetlights would be dimmed overnight, aims to deliver energy savings while balancing public safety and community needs. Similar initiatives have been successfully implemented in other areas, with demonstrated benefits in reducing carbon emissions and extending the lifespan of lighting infrastructure.
	This business case explores a strategic approach to implementing lighting in a way that prioritises safety, addresses public concerns, and aligns with the council's commitment to sustainability and budget efficiency.
Options / Alternatives	There are many options with fluctuations on timings

Impact	Dimming of streetlights would take place with community safety and community needs in mind. Where selected, groups of streetlights can be dimmed overnight delivering energy savings. Similar initiatives have been successfully implemented in other areas, with longer term benefits of reducing carbon emissions and extending the lifespan of lighting infrastructure.
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