1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update Members on proposals for implementing service charges from April 2016 and report the results of the consultation undertaken with tenants who receive and benefit from additional services.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Where a social landlord currently pools rent and service charges, they are required by the Welsh Government (WG) to disaggregate service charges from the rent. In a letter dated 8 July 2015, the WG confirmed that all social landlords are still required to complete the process of de-pooling by April 2016, with transitional arrangements if required.

2.2 With the introduction of Universal Credit, tenants will be required to provide information on the breakdown of rents and service charges as part of their on-line application. Tenants will only be able to complete their applications correctly if their landlord provides them with appropriate information.

2.3 The WG intends to work collaboratively with local housing authorities and housing associations to develop a Service Charge Standard and related guidance which is anticipated to be in place by April 2017. The guidance which is to be developed is not intended to provide detailed advice for authorities on how to carry out the de-pooling exercise but will set out the broad principles to be observed based on good practice.
2.4 For the past 2 years, Wrexham has been working in collaboration with three other north Wales authorities being Denbighshire, Isle of Anglesey and Flintshire in sharing information, advice and best practice on de-pooling charges. Denbighshire and Isle of Anglesey implemented service charges from April 2015 with Flintshire implementing charges for new tenants from April 2015 and for existing tenants they are to phase service charges over 3 years from April 2016.

2.5 The Council currently charges some service charges mainly in sheltered housing and some general needs blocks of flats. Extensive work has been undertaken in identifying all current property related services and annual costings. In de-pooling central charges to the types of property which benefit largely from communal services will ensure that a fair, transparent and robust system is in place as only those tenants who receive these services will be charged for them.

2.6 Consultation has been undertaken with 3,721 tenants that will be affected by the implementation of service charges by providing information on the proposals, completion of a questionnaire, visits to 19 sheltered housing schemes and holding 15 consultation events at locations across the Borough. At the time of writing this report, 908 questionnaire forms had been returned (24% response) and 269 tenants attended either sheltered housing meetings or consultation events held across the Borough.

2.7 There has been a good response to the consultation with comments being made relating to affordability, quality of services and monitoring service delivery. Officers have taken into consideration the feedback received in developing proposals for implementing service charges from April 2016 in order to minimise the impact on tenants as well as ensuring that costs are accurate and reasonable. Officers will continue to review and monitor services ensuring that value for money is achieved and tenants will be involved in this process.

2.8 In order to comply with the requirements of the WG’s policy for social housing rents it is proposed that from April 2016, tenants who receive additional services living in general needs blocks of flats and bungalows will initially pay up to a maximum of £2 per week (48 weeks basis) and for tenants living in sheltered housing increases will be phased in by £2 per week (48 week basis) each year in addition to the current Sheltered Management charge of £4.11 until the new service charge is reached. Each year service charges will be reviewed based on actual costs of providing services and tenants will be notified of a breakdown of the service charges to be charged as part of their annual rent setting letter in March each year.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members to consider the information within this report and recommend to Executive Board:

i) for general and sheltered tenancies, implement service charges for those elements outlined in 4.23 and 4.28 of this report, to those tenants who receive such services from April 2016.
ii) for all new and existing tenants living in general need blocks of flats and bungalows who receive services, will initially pay up to a maximum of £2 per week (48 week basis) service charge in addition of their weekly rent.
iii) for existing tenants living in sheltered housing to phase increases of £2 per week (48 week basis) each year in addition to the current Sheltered Management charge of £4.11 per week, until the new service charge is reached.
iv) for new tenants moving into sheltered housing implement the full service charge.

v) service charges for communal lighting and heating within sheltered housing schemes will be calculated and based on the estimated savings that will arise following improvement work.

vi) introduce grounds maintenance service charges for all tenants with “common and exclusive boundaries”.

vii) not to charge for grounds maintenance for HRA Public Open Space but to continue to pool these costs.

viii) agree and issue Service Standards for window cleaning and grounds maintenance.

ix) agree and implement a Service Level Agreement for grounds maintenance.

x) to receive a further report after 12 months of implementation on the impact of these proposals.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

(i) As part of the Welsh Government’s new policy for social housing rents, Landlords have a requirement to de-pool rents and service charges, by March 2016, to ensure that only those tenants that receive or are entitled to receive services, are charged service charges.

(ii) Under Universal Credit arrangements, tenants will be asked to provide evidence to support any claims for eligible service charges and rent costs.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.1 The Welsh Government’s Policy for Social Housing Rents was implemented by Registered Social Landlords (RSL’s) in April 2014 and Local Housing Authorities in April 2015 following the exit from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Subsidy System.

4.2 The Council’s Executive Board on 11 November 2014 (Report No. HHPPE/88/14) approved a new rent policy for implementation from April 2015 based on one rent for each type of property being charged based on the new Welsh Government (WG) mid target rent which is the basic rent.

4.3 The WG’s new policy for social housing rents also states that where a social landlord currently pools rents and service charges, they are required to start the process of disaggregating service charges from rents and complete the exercise by March 2016.

4.4 The Council like many authorities has historically applied a system of rent pooling which means that all tenants pay for the costs of services within their rent, regardless of whether they benefit from a service or not.

4.5 The legal power to charge service charges dates back to the provisions under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. Section 18 of that Act defines what a service charge is. It is ‘an amount paid by a tenant for additional landlord services, such as communal lighting and heating’. Service charges are generally applied to tenants of sheltered housing schemes and general needs blocks of flats where additional services are provided.

4.6 On 11 June 2014, Members of the Homes and Environment Scrutiny Committee were presented with a report on the principles of de-pooling service charges for Council
tenants and leaseholders (Report No: HHPPE/43/14s). At this meeting Members recommended that consideration of this matter be deferred until the WG issued related guidance, that the impact of service charges be minimised wherever possible and consultation with tenants commence on the introduction of service charges.

4.7 At the June 2014 Scrutiny Committee meeting, Members suggested that responsibility for some services should not be subject to service charges, for example, maintenance of fire safety equipment and lift maintenance in sheltered schemes.

4.8 Two Member Workshops have also been held on service charges in February and June 2015. The Homes and Environment Scrutiny Committee considered a report in respect of work programme planning at their meeting on 8 July 2015, and the following was agreed in respect of this report:-

i) That the report in respect of Council House Rents –Service Charges, does not require the presentation information that was included at the recent all Member Workshop on this issue.

ii) That the report in respect of Council House Rents –Service Charges, include details of comparisons with other Authorities approaches to service charges and the results of the related tenant consultation exercise.

Welsh Government Guidance on Service Charges

4.9 Within the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, Welsh Ministers have powers to set standards to be met by social landlords and to issue guidance which supports and amplifies the standards. Sections 111 and 112 of Part 4 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the relevant powers for the setting of standards for rents and service charges for accommodation provided by local authorities.

4.10 In December 2014, a letter from the WG advised local housing authorities that those landlords who are yet to de-pool rents and service charges are required to complete the process by March 2016, with transitional arrangements if required.

4.11 The WG policy for social housing rents states that service charges should not be charged as a global figure within the ‘rent’ but rather should be separated out and charged separately. There are a number of reasons for the WG adopting this policy including:

- The way in which service charges are applied should be the same for all social landlords, i.e., only tenants and properties that attract services should pay service charges. It is unfair to those tenants who do not receive services that they should be contributing to them through their rent.

- With the introduction of Universal Credit, tenants will be required to provide information on the breakdown of rents and service charges as part of their on-line application. Tenants will only be able to complete their applications correctly if their landlord provides them with appropriate information and therefore authorities need to separate and show these costs.

4.12 The WG recognises that the process to carry out the de-pooling exercise can be complex due to many differences in the type and size of properties and they intend to work collaboratively with social landlords to develop a Social Rent and a Service Charge Standard.
The WG have anticipated that the Service Charge Standard and related guidance will be in place by April 2017. The WG have stated that the standard will set out the high level key requirements while the guidance will set out the key principles to be observed based on good practice. The new Social Rent and Service Charge Standards will apply equally to all social landlords and all social landlords should ensure they are sufficiently prepared to meet both Standards and enable tenants to satisfy the requirements of Universal Credit.

A further letter from the WG dated 8 July 2015 (attached as Appendix 1) confirms that all social landlords are required to meet the April 2016 deadline for de-pooling. They also state that under Universal Credit arrangements it is essential that rent and service charges are de-pooled and that tenants are provided with appropriate information and service charges become fully transparent. The WG’s Service Charge Standard will place a duty on social landlords to ensure that rents and service charges are separated and clearly identifiable. It will be the responsibility of each social landlord to ensure that the appropriate information and breakdown of service charges is available to tenants.

The WG are in regular contact with all social landlords in Wales, including Wrexham, requesting individual authorities’ progress with the de-pooling of rents and service charges.

In addition to the WG policy requirements to de-pool charges there are a number of other reasons authorities should de-pool charges:

- To produce accurate, transparent and consistent service charges for those tenants and leaseholders who receive services
- Ensure services subject to charge are delivered effectively and represent value for money
- Some tenants are paying for services they do not receive
- Services provided and quality of service does not reflect the needs and aspirations of tenants
- Historical arrangements within organisations mean that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) contribution to some services is in no way related to the costs of providing that service.

Separating service charges from the rent means that the Council will be complying with the requirements set down by the WG. Tenants will be provided with details of the costs of additional services ensuring that the services that are subject to charge are delivered effectively and represent value for money.

Each year all authorities in Wales, including Wrexham, are required by the WG to submit a viable Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. This plan outlines how the Council will use its resources to provide an investment programme to improve and bring the housing stock up to Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) by 2020. The plan is supported by a 30 year financial model which contains key assumptions including projected income from service charges.

Progress on De-pooling Service Charges by Other Welsh Authorities

The WG has advised authorities they are expected to liaise closely with other landlords who have completed the de-pooling exercise or who have made significant progress. Contact has been made with all ten stock retaining Welsh Authorities to determine what progress they have made. Details of the progress and the approach of other authorities, who have agreed to share their information, are outlined in
Appendix 2. In summary, all authorities are implementing service charges, with the majority already having implemented some charges; some are undertaking consultation with tenants on the proposals, whilst others are implementing charges from April 2016.

4.20 Wrexham has been working in collaboration with the three north Wales authorities Denbighshire, Isle of Anglesey and Flintshire, in sharing information, advice and best practice on de-pooling charges. Denbighshire and Isle of Anglesey implemented service charges from April 2015 with Flintshire implementing charges for new tenants from April 2015 and for existing tenants, they are to phase in service charges, over 3 years from April 2016.

Proposals for Implementation

4.21 The Council currently charges some service charges, mainly in sheltered housing and some general needs flats, which are over and above the basic service that is provided by the rent.

4.22 Leaseholders (mainly those living in flats) currently pay a service charge. It is proposed that in future all tenants and leaseholders living in the same block of flats will pay the same amount of service charge regardless of tenure. Charging tenants and leaseholders, who live in properties which benefit from communal services, will ensure that a fair, transparent and robust system is in place.

Proposals for General Needs Housing (Flats/Bungalows)

4.23 For tenants living in general needs blocks of flats and bungalows it is proposed that tenants who benefit from communal services will be charged, where applicable, the following elements. (It should be noted that not all tenants will be charged for all the elements as they do not receive all services).

- Maintenance to door entry systems
- Lighting and heating in communal areas
- Maintenance to communal TV aerials/digital systems
- Minor repairs, involving fixture and fitting improvements within communal areas
- Cleaning of communal areas within blocks of flats
- Window cleaning
- Grounds Maintenance of common and exclusive boundaries outside blocks of flats/bungalows.
- Management charge for administering service charges

4.24 It has been identified that by introducing some or all of the charges for the above services, 3,269 tenants would be affected. 61.76% (2,019 tenants) of those who would be affected are in receipt of Housing Benefit. Under the current Housing Benefit regulations these service charges are eligible for benefit.

4.25 It is proposed that tenants living in general needs blocks of flats and bungalows who receive additional services from the Council will initially pay up to a maximum of £2 per week. It has been estimated that 68% (2,211 tenants) of those tenants affected would pay service charges up to a maximum amount of £1.50 per week. Appendix 4 shows the estimated service charge element and the number of tenants affected. Where charges would be over £2 per week (48 week basis), these will be capped at £2 per week and reviewed further.
4.26 It is proposed to implement service charges from April 2016, as an additional charge, in addition to the basic rent, for all existing and new tenants who receive these additional services.

Proposals for Sheltered Housing

4.27 Tenants in sheltered housing have paid additional charges for many years. Tenants currently pay a Sheltered Management Charge of £4.11 per week, which is a contribution towards the running costs to the building and a Warden Support Charge of £3.08 per week. The Sheltered Management Charge does not fully reflect the actual costs of services provided and these costs have now been calculated. The Warden Support Charge is a contribution towards the costs of support provided by the Warden. The Warden Support costs receive a contribution from Supporting People and are outside the scope of this de-pooling exercise.

4.28 It is proposed that tenants who benefit from communal services living in sheltered housing schemes, will be charged where applicable for the following:

- Maintenance to door entry systems
- Communal lighting/heating/laundry energy consumption
- Maintenance to communal TV aerials/digital systems
- Cleaning of communal areas within the unit
- Minor repairs involving fixture and fitting improvements within communal areas
- Window cleaning
- Communal water charges
- Grounds maintenance of common and exclusive boundaries outside and around the sheltered unit
- Maintenance of laundry equipment
- Maintenance of security cameras
- TV licence for communal lounge
- Management charge for administering service charges

4.29 There are currently 662 tenants living in sheltered accommodation and it has been identified that 461 tenants would be affected by these sheltered charges. The remaining sheltered tenants would be liable to the lower general needs charges and are identified in paragraph 4.24. Appendix 4 shows the estimated service charge element and the number of tenants affected. 60.30% (278 tenants) of those tenants affected are in receipt of Housing Benefit and again the proposed service charges are eligible for housing benefit.

4.30 Charges will be calculated based on actual costs per sheltered scheme, then evenly shared between all tenants living within the scheme. It is proposed that charges will be implemented from April 2016 with transitional arrangements being put in place for existing tenants.

4.31 For existing tenants living in sheltered housing it is proposed to phase in the increases over a number of years from April 2016 by £2 per week (48 week basis) each year, in addition to the current sheltered management charge of £4.11 per week until the new service charge is reached. For any new tenants moving in to sheltered accommodation, the full amount of service charge will be implemented in addition to the weekly rent.

Calculation of Costs
4.32 The Council has undertaken extensive work in identifying and mapping out services to individual properties, who should be charged and current expenditure costs for such services. We have tried to keep costs reasonable and as low as possible.

4.33 In calculating charges for both general needs and sheltered housing, we will take into account the actual costs of providing the service in the previous year. This will create maximum transparency although there would be disparity in the cost of services to different buildings and normally this means that those tenants living in smaller blocks of flats pay more than those in larger blocks due to economies of scale. The costs will then be evenly shared between all tenants who benefit from these services.

Reducing Energy Costs for Communal Lighting & Heating

4.34 In identifying and calculating costs, particularly within sheltered housing schemes, it is evident that costs for communal lighting, heating and energy consumption are one of the higher service charges. Work has been undertaken in identifying energy costs at units by installing monitors on some electrical appliances to record the amount of energy used.

4.35 Work has also commenced in trying to reduce energy costs for communal lighting and heating in sheltered housing schemes and meetings have taken place with Utility Companies to discuss issues with billing and tariffs. A programme of installing LED lighting and motion sensors in communal sheltered scheme areas and replacement of storage heaters in communal areas with modern fan controlled storage heaters is scheduled and it is estimated this work will help to reduce electricity consumption and costs. Two sheltered schemes have already been fitted with LED lighting and sensors and it is anticipated that over the next few years savings will be seen by both the Council and tenants due to these improvements.

4.36 The above improvement work costs will fall on the Housing Capital Programme but it is proposed that when calculating service charges for communal lighting and heating they will be based on the estimated costs that will arise following improvement work.

Grounds Maintenance

4.37 The Council’s Environment department currently carries out grounds maintenance and grass cutting for communal areas and all HRA owned land. All Council owned and all HRA land across the Borough that is maintained by their service has been identified.

4.38 In regard to charges for grounds maintenance, some Councils have separated the area into zones to calculate appropriate charges based on the land within each zone whilst others have divided the total costs of grounds maintenance between the total number of properties.

4.39 It is proposed at present not to introduce a service charge to recover the cost of grounds maintenance for HRA public open places on Council estates but to continue to pool these costs (as all tenants would pay the same charge). This can be reviewed when guidance is issued by the WG. It is proposed, however, to charge and recover costs from tenants that benefit from grounds maintenance of areas directly around or outside specific properties where there is a common and exclusive boundary.

Results of Consultation

4.40 From the consultation, comments have been received about the quality and level of services currently provided. These comments are being investigated and will be
addressed with the providers of these services. A large number of comments received were in relation to the level of service provided for window cleaning in sheltered housing schemes and grounds maintenance. A number of tenants due to the level of service or because they wish to have their grass cut more regularly stated that they either cut the grass themselves or pay someone to undertake this work.

4.41 As part of the consultation tenants were asked if they wished to be involved in monitoring and reviewing services provided. A total of 88 tenants were interested in participating in some way and this may include being involved in agreeing service standards, completing a satisfaction questionnaire or receiving a telephone call to ask whether a service has been provided.

4.42 In order to address some of the issues it has been agreed to develop and have in place the following:

- Service standards for grounds maintenance.
- Provide information to tenants advising of the level of service to be delivered
- Service Level Agreement between Housing and Environment
- Regular monitoring of the grounds maintenance contract and quality of service undertaken by both Officers and tenants

‘Opt out’ Scheme for Grounds Maintenance

4.43 As part of the consultation some tenants who cut their own grass or arranged for someone to undertake this work have asked whether an ‘opt out’ scheme would be available for grounds maintenance. This is an area which will need to be explored further.

4.44 It is proposed that service charges for grounds maintenance will still be implemented from April 2016 including those tenants who cut their own grass but further tenant consultation will be undertaken to consider an ‘Opt out’ scheme which could allow areas or streets to opt out of grass cutting if all tenants were in agreement to carry out the work themselves. If such a scheme was adopted it would likely have to be on a street, row or block of properties decision as opposed to an individual opting out as it would prove difficult to manage the contract and would not give appreciable savings.

Summary

4.45 Following a good response to the tenant consultation 908 questionnaires were returned and Officers have spoken to 269 tenants. Views on the current level of services provided as well as main areas of comments to the proposals for implementation of service charges can be found in Appendix 3 but some of the mains issues raised are summarised below:

- concern that the number and amount of service charges may increase in the future,
- issues with the quality of the grass cutting and grounds maintenance service
- lack of machines in some laundry rooms in sheltered schemes
- affordability particularly for those tenants not in receipt of Housing Benefit
- tenants were happy to pay for services if a good service was provided
- what if a tenant does not use specific services such as laundry, TV in communal lounge within sheltered schemes
- some issues with the quality of window cleaning service provided at sheltered schemes
can a tenant ‘opt out’ of a particular service i.e. grounds maintenance.

4.46 From the questionnaires returned, 34 tenants specifically stated that they were totally against the implementation of service charges and did not agree with the proposals. 32 tenants stated that they agreed with the proposals and thought they were fair and reasonable.

4.47 From the consultation it is evident that there are three main areas that need to be considered and addressed in the implementation of service charges:

- Affordability
- Expectations & quality of services
- Monitoring of services & adherence to Service Level Agreements

4.48 Officers have tried to address the above three issues in the proposals for implementing service charges. We have tried to keep the number of charges and costs as low as possible along with proposing that the implementation of charges be phased in gradually for sheltered tenants and a maximum amount applied for tenants in general needs housing. Service standards will be developed and awareness raised with tenants of the level of service to be delivered, i.e., number of grass cuts, number of times windows to be cleaned and level of service. Work will be undertaken involving tenants who have expressed an interest in being involved in the monitoring and reviewing of services to ensure delivery of services is in line with the Service Level Agreements and value for money is being achieved.

4.49 Policy Framework:- De-pooling of service charges links to the Council Plan of Homes that meet people’s needs and aspirations PL1 and Engaged and satisfied customers O1.

4.50 Budget:- It is important that the Council recovers expenditure attributed to service charges which reflect actual costs and which are reasonable to enable delivery of services. This will support and meet the financial assumptions within the HRA Business Plan that service charges will be recovered.

4.51 Legal:- The legal power to charge service charges dates back to the provisions under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. Under section 24 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government Act 2003), a local housing authority may make reasonable charges for tenancies of their dwellings but must from time to time review their rents. The current Tenancy Agreement permits changes to rent or other charges, giving four weeks written notice to the tenant. The proposals comply with the Welsh Government policy on de-pooling service charges from rents for implementation in April 2016. Changes will be compliant to the terms of the Tenancy Agreement as well as the terms held within individual Lease Agreements.

4.52 Staffing:- No staffing implications.

4.53 Equality/Human Rights:- An Impact Assessment has been carried out and the Departmental Reference Number is HPPE/EIA/017. It has been identified that tenants and leaseholders who receive additional services will be affected by the proposals. Higher amounts of service charges will affect mainly tenants living in sheltered housing schemes as this type of accommodation benefits from more communal services. To minimise the impact of charges it is proposed to phase in increases by £2 per week (48 week basis) each year, in addition to the current sheltered charge
until the new service charge is reached for existing tenants. For tenants living in general needs housing we propose that charges will initially be up to a maximum of £2 per week (48 week basis). The service charges proposed are eligible for Housing Benefit under current regulations and 62% of tenants affected are eligible for housing benefit.

4.54 To mitigate the impact of these proposals, information on the proposals has been sent to all 3,721 tenants who will be affected. Visits have been undertaken to every sheltered housing scheme and 15 consultation events have been held in locations across the borough to answer any concerns. Contact has been made with Welfare Rights to advise them of the proposals for service charges as it is acknowledged that there will be some tenants living in both general and sheltered housing who are not in receipt of housing benefit. At the meetings and consultation events held which were attended by 269 tenants, Officers have raised awareness of housing benefit and the Welfare Advice Telephone line which tenants can contact for benefit advice and ensure that they are maximising their income. Officers will offer any support and guidance to tenants who think they may face difficulties.

4.55 **Risks:** In de-pooling service charges from rents, a policy will be in place which is fair and transparent based on actual costs. In implementing charges from April 2016 with transitional arrangements being put in place will help to minimise the financial impact for tenants but this will take longer to recover income.

5. **CONSULTATION**

5.1 A report was presented to the Wrexham Tenant & Member Partnership on 6 June 2014 seeking the views of Partnership on the principles of de-pooling service charges and phasing their introduction. A report was then presented to Homes & Environment Scrutiny Committee on 11 June 2014 which included comments from the Partnership.

5.2 In October 2014, all Council tenants received information with their quarterly rent statement on why the Council has to change the way it breaks down rent charges. Tenants had the opportunity to give their views on the principles of separating out service charges and the best way to implement these changes. Housing received approximately 30 responses giving specific views.

5.3 An all Member Workshop was held on 3 February 2015 which outlined why authorities have to de-pool and introduce service charges, the Welsh Government’s timetable and possible options for Wrexham. Members raised a number of concerns and asked for further clarification on proposals so a further Member Workshop was held on the 16 June 2015 to respond to these concerns.

5.4 Following discussion of the forward work programme of the Homes and Environment Scrutiny Committee at 8 July 2015 meeting, it was agreed that consultation be undertaken with those tenants who will be affected by the proposals on service charges and feedback from this consultation will be reported to this Scrutiny Committee in October 2015.

5.5 A seven week consultation exercise commenced in August 2015. A letter, information and a copy of a questionnaire were sent out to a total of 3,721 tenants who will be affected by the proposals. The letter to tenants living in blocks of flats, bungalows and sheltered housing schemes advised them of a number of information and consultation events being held throughout the borough. Tenants were also asked whether they would like to be involved in monitoring and reviewing services that the Council provide. Tenants had until 18 September 2015 to return completed questionnaires.
5.6 At the time of writing this report (21 September) a total of 908 questionnaire forms have been returned, which is a 24% response rate. This figure consists of 777 (23%) general needs flats/bungalows responses, and 131 (32%) sheltered housing tenants.

5.7 In addition to the questionnaires sent to tenants, 19 meetings were held in sheltered housing schemes along with 15 consultation events held in various locations across the borough, to advise tenants on the proposed service charges and seek views and address concerns. Meetings held at the sheltered housing schemes were well attended with 209 tenants attending, however, only 60 tenants attended the 15 drop in sessions held throughout the Borough.

5.8 On the questionnaires sent out to tenants there was a question asking for comments on the proposals which was a free text space for comments. From the total number of questionnaires returned, 34 tenants specifically stated in this space that that they were against the implementation of service charges as required by the WG and did not agree with the proposals. 32 tenants stated that they agreed with the proposals, and thought they were fair and reasonable.

5.9 In respect of whether tenants would like to be involved in monitoring and reviewing services provided. In general needs blocks of flats/bungalows, 78 tenants said they would be interested in participating in some way, and in sheltered housing schemes, 10 tenants said they would be interested in participating.

5.10 Appendix 3 outlines the results of the questionnaires returned in relation to the quality of services tenants currently receive, as well as the main areas of comments received regarding the proposals.

5.11 A report was presented to the Wrexham Tenant & Member Partnership on 18 September 2015 updating members of the results of the recent tenant consultation.

6. EVALUATION OF OPTIONS

6.1 N/A

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