

## Budget Proposals 2016-17: CCTV

### Summary of Feedback Received and Key Findings

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#### Why we consulted?

Over the last four years we have had to make savings of £23m because we've received less money from central government. We have done this by becoming more efficient at what we do, by reducing some of our administrative functions and increasing our income. Throughout this period we have done our best to protect front line services.

We now have to find another £20m over the next four years, with almost £11m to be found in 2016/17. Much of this will come from further efficiencies within the council, but £4.6m will have to come from services that will impact the public.

In order to inform the budget setting process for 2016/17 we published a list of those proposals which would likely have a direct impact on service users, and sought the views from those affected and interested:

- to understand the likely impact
- to identify any measures to reduce their impact
- to explore any possible alternatives

#### Approach

All the proposals were published on the council's website on 3 November 2015 with feedback requested by 14 December 2015. Respondents were directed to a [central index page](#), with a video message from the Chief Executive outlining the background to the exercise.

Information relating to this proposal was linked directly from this index page. This contained more detailed information on what was specifically proposed, information on what we thought the impact might be, as well as what else we had considered in developing and arriving at this proposal. Feedback was then invited through an online form, individual discussions with Parish Councils, Thames Valley Police and the Bid, and through a dedicated email address.

Each individual budget proposal was placed on our [Consultation Portal](#) which automatically notified those registered that an exercise had been launched. Members of the West Berkshire community panel (around 800 people) and local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations were also emailed directly, notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions.

Heads of Service made direct contact with those organisations affected by any of the budget proposals prior to them being made publically available.

A press release was issued on the same date, as well as publicised through Facebook and Twitter.

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#### Background

Nationally, crime is low and in West Berkshire this is no different. In fact crime has fallen consistently over the last five years. The council is committed to continuing to work with its partners to keep the incidence of crime and anti social behaviour low. We believe that local businesses and residents have a very important part to play in keeping crime low by staying vigilant, taking appropriate action to safeguard their property and reporting any crime or anti social behaviour to Thames Valley Police.

We currently provide a Public Open Space CCTV service at an annual cost of £224,930. There are 40 cameras deployed across the District as follows:

Newbury - 24 (two located in Greenham)  
Thatcham - 4  
Hungerford - 4  
Pangbourne - 2  
Lambourn - 3  
Theale - 3

The cameras are currently monitored 24/7 by the CCTV control room at the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council. We currently receive no funding from any of the appropriate town and parish councils or from Thames Valley Police for this service. This is a non statutory service and one that many councils across the country have already closed down without a negative effect on crime levels.

Unless we receive assurances from the appropriate town and parish Councils and from Thames Valley Police that they are prepared to fully fund this service it is proposed to suspend this service from 1 April 2016.

#### Summary of Key Points

There were 25 responses to this proposal. Five were from Parish and Town Councils (Newbury Town Council, Hungerford Town Council, Tilehurst Parish Council, Lambourn Parish Council and Theale Parish Council). The Newbury Town Centre Neighbourhood Action Group also responded to the proposal.

Two of those responding considered that the proposal to suspend the service was a good idea. 4 individuals considered that the CCTV service provided reassurance and helped to manage the late night economy. It was suggested that the businesses benefitted from this service particularly in Newbury Town Centre. One of those responding suggested that the public were probably unaware of the existence of the CCTV cameras.

Some of the comments from the Parishes suggested that as everyone benefitted from CCTV in Newbury, in particular, it was unfair to ask just the ratepayers of Newbury to fund the CCTV service.

Theale, Lambourn and Pangbourne Parish Councils have confirmed that they will not be pursuing an alternative delivery model for CCTV in their areas. Newbury Town Council is actively pursuing an alternative delivery model with Newbury Bid and Thames Valley Police and Thatcham Town Council are looking at the potential to partner with Newbury Town Council. Hungerford Town Council is still considering its options.

#### 1. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how this proposal might impact people?

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It was suggested that some people coming into the Newbury Town Centre, in particular, could feel less reassured about their safety if the service was suspended. The night time economy in Newbury Town Centre is managed effectively and the suspension of the service could impact on this. The proposal could also weaken the 'Shopsafe' and 'Pubwatch' schemes.

**2. Do you feel that this proposal will affect particular individuals more than others, and if so, how do you think we might help with this?**

It was suggested that the proposal could impact on the elderly, disabled and women with young children and businesses.

**3. Do you have any suggestions as to how this service might be delivered in a different way? If so, please provide details.**

Three of those responding considered that the system should be moved to 'record only' thereby reducing the overall cost of the service by £147,000. It was also suggested that the Police or Police and Crime Commissioner should be asked to contribute towards a 'record only' system.

Two people responding suggested that 'dummy' cameras should be used.

Four of those responding offered no suggestions as to how the service might be delivered in a different way.

There are ongoing discussions with Newbury Town Council, the BID and Thames Valley Police, Thatcham Town Council and Hungerford Town Council about them developing their own bespoke operating model which they would manage and fund themselves.

**4. Do you know of any existing community initiatives which could help to provide reassurance in your community? If so, please provide details. If not, would you be interested in establishing one?**

One of those responding suggested that Neighbourhood Watch could help to mitigate the suspension of the service.

**5. Do you think the 'Pubwatch' and 'Shopsafe' schemes could be strengthened by more businesses signing up? If so, please comment.**

Seven of the responding to this proposal considered that 'Pubwatch' and 'Shopsafe' Schemes could be strengthened to mitigate the impact of the suspension of the CCTV system.

**6. Do you think the introduction of a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme or improvements to your current scheme (where appropriate) might mitigate some of the impact? If so, please comment.**

Four of those responding to this proposal considered that Neighbourhood Watch Schemes could help to mitigate the impact of suspending the CCTV service. Two of those individuals responding did not think that Neighbourhood Watch could help to mitigate the impact of suspending this service.

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#### 7. Any further comments?

Two of those responding considered that to remove all of the cameras would be a false economy.

#### Conclusion

There are no comments which have been received which the Council did not anticipate. Three of the relevant Town Councils, Newbury, Thatcham and Hungerford are investigating the possibility of developing their own bespoke CCTV models and the Council will continue to provide support where it can to make these happen.

With the above potential developments in mind there is no reason why this savings proposal cannot be progressed.

**Please note:** *In order to allow everyone who wished the opportunity to contribute, feedback was not sampled. Therefore this wasn't a quantitative, statistically valid exercise. It was neither the premise, purpose, nor within the capability of the exercise, to determine the overall community's level of support, or views on the proposals, with any degree of confidence.*

*The feedback captured therefore should be seen in the context of 'those who responded', rather than reflective of the wider community.*

*All the responses have been provided verbatim as an appendix to this report. Whilst this summary seeks to distil the key, substantive points made, it should also be read in conjunction with the more detailed verbatim comments to ensure a full, rounded perspective of the views and comments are considered.*

Andy Day  
Head of Strategic Support  
Strategic Support  
4 January 2016  
Version 1 (CB)