

Budget Proposals 2016-17: Kintbury Jubilee Leisure Centre

Summary of Feedback Received and Key Findings

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 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

The council currently provides a grant of £9,000 to Kintbury Parish Council to assist with the operation of the Jubilee Leisure Centre, Kintbury. This is the only non-West Berkshire Council leisure centre that is given any funding by the council.

It is proposed to cease the grant of £9,000 with effect from April 2016.

Summary of Key Points

At the close of the consultation period a total of eight responses had been received. A further e-mail response was sent in on 4 January 2016, outside of the consultation window.

Three responses were received from the Clerk to the Parish Council; two were from Kintbury Badminton Club and three from individuals. No responses have been received from other user groups at the centre.

Seven responses felt the grant funding should be continued and highlighted the role they felt the centre played as a community leisure centre in Kintbury and the potential issues some people would face in trying to use alternative facilities

1. Are you, or anyone you care for, a user of this service?

Five people indicated they were a user of the centre, two people said they were not a user of the centre and one did not give any indication as to whether they used the centre or not.

2. Do you think council should continue to fund a non West Berkshire Council Leisure Centre within West Berkshire District? Please explain the reason for your response.

Seven responses felt West Berkshire Council should continue the grant the reasons provided were primarily around the centre being well used by local people and that some communities in the Parish would not be able to access other facilities nearby due to issues relating to the ability to travel.

One respondent did highlight that the data would not pick up people who were members of clubs, but then indicated that the club they were a member of provided activity for just 6-7 people from the village per week.

A respondent did indicate a well used crèche facility at the centre.

The Parish Council highlighted the investment that had been made initially into the construction of the centre in 1982 by Newbury District Council and by West Berkshire Council to bring the centre up to standard to allow it to be operated by a third party.

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

Responses have highlighted the potential impact on users who are more elderly or on low incomes. The Parish Council also highlighted that there is not sufficient density of these populations to allow the centre to operate without public subsidy.

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4. 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?

The groups as highlighted in three above are mentioned; especially those for whom travel would be an issue with other proposals being consulted upon by West Berkshire Council. No suggestions have been made as to how the Council may help with this, other than retain the grant.

One respondent highlighted that a fitness instructor could lose her job.

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

One respondent suggested that the centre could be run by volunteers.

The Parish Council indicated they were looking at alternative options for the centre, but the time frame for the proposed stopping of the grant does not provide them with sufficient time to move options forward.

6. Is there any way that you, or your organisation, can contribute in helping to alleviate the impact of this proposal? If so, please provide details of how you can help.

The Parish Council stated they already contribute approx £15,000 towards the management fee for the centre and do not feel they could increase this in 2016/17 and going forward.

7. Any further comments?

The Parish Council stated the proposal was an attack by West Berkshire Council on rural communities, whilst one respondent stated that the proposal will lead to more cars on the roads thus impacting on the level of CO2 emissions in the atmosphere.

Conclusion

The consultation exercise attracted a few responses and it is notable that only one of the current user groups was represented in the responses therefore the level of impact suggested is based on limited information.

Any decision on the future of the Centre would be for the current trustees to make in due course.

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.

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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.

Jim Sweeting
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