

Budget Proposals 2016-17: Physical Activity in Adults

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.

Budget Proposals 2016-17: Physical Activity in Adults

Summary of Feedback Received and Key Findings

Background

Physical activity and healthy eating form the mainstay in preventing adults becoming overweight and obese. Physical activity can help reduce the risk of developing a major illness, such as heart disease, stroke or cancer. In 2014, 62% of adults in West Berkshire described themselves as 'physically active', higher than the average for England, at 57%.

Currently we promote physical activity in a number of ways including through the provision of the Green Bag scheme which involves sports equipment for hire from local leisure centres, giving adults and families the opportunities to try new sports for free and to be active together. Furthermore, Walking for Health provides a variety of regular walks across West Berkshire, open to all and aimed at varying levels of walking experience.

It is proposed that the budget for the Green Bag Scheme be reduced by £2,000 and the budget for Walking for Health by £4,000. Therefore these initiatives will continue, but with reduced funding. This will result in a total saving of £6,000.

Summary of Key Points

There were two responses, both from individuals, to this consultation. It was felt that this is a service that is particularly useful for people who have health issues and so has the potential to reduce further episodes of ill health. While the proposed cuts were felt to be acceptable, it was commented that additional cuts in the future could be more detrimental in the long term.

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

There were two responses to this consultation, one of which declared themselves to be a user of this service.

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

It was expressed that this service is used by many individuals who have health issues and so it helps to contribute towards their recovery. Therefore the removal of this service could potentially cost the NHS more as individuals may require further treatment. It was also felt that the provision of this service provides motivation for individuals to attend.

3. 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 felt that this service is particularly beneficial to individuals who use it as a form of rehabilitation following a health issue (for example after a heart attack).

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

It was suggested that the council could seek sponsorship from some of the drug companies or other businesses in the area.

5. Would you use the Green bag scheme if a subsidised payment was required? Please explain the reason for your response.

Budget Proposals 2016-17: Physical Activity in Adults

Summary of Feedback Received and Key Findings

It was felt that most individuals would use the Green Bag scheme as long as the payment was a small amount. However, it was felt that individuals on benefits or low incomes should not have to pay.

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.

There were no responses to this question

7. Any further comments?

It was recognised that cuts are necessary given the current financial climate and one individual commented that the proposals are satisfactory to still maintain the main schemes in the area. However it was felt that additional cuts in the future would be detrimental for the long term as the maintenance of good health in an aging population is essential to keep medical and NHS costs down.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it was felt that this service is particularly beneficial to those individuals who have health issues as it provides a form of rehabilitation and motivation for people to attend. However, it was recognised that cuts are necessary and that people would probably be prepared to pay a small amount for the use of the Green Bag scheme.

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.

Sarah Rayfield
Speciality Registrar in Public Health
Public Health and Wellbeing Team
8 January 2016
Version 1 (CB)