

## Budget Proposals 2016-17: Smoking Cessation Service – ‘Smoke Free Life’

### 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, insert any service specific engagement exercises, 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

Smoking is the main cause of preventable illness and premature death in England. It is also the largest cause of inequality in death rates between the rich and the poor.

Research shows that people in certain occupations, those with low level of educational attainment and individuals of disadvantaged social groups, are two to three more times likely to die from smoking.

Smoking prevalence in England is 18% compared to 15.4% in West Berkshire. This suggests that over 23,800 people aged over 18 in West Berkshire smoke.

The provision of Smoking Cessation services is a statutory duty and to achieve ‘best value’, it was agreed that the service should be provided on a Berkshire wide basis.

The Smoking Cessation services provide a range of support pharmacology and behavioural support. The local Stop Smoking service based across Berkshire offers 1-2-1 support with fully trained advisors within the community. The current contribution made by the council to this service is £311,000 annually.

The proposal is to reduce the annual contribution by £32,000.

### Summary of Key Points

West Berkshire Council received five responses for the Smoking Cessation Service; budget proposals. The comments were received electronically through West Berkshire Council’s website. The comments do not represent the view of an organisation or group of individuals.

The five comments were somewhat varied when describing how the services might be delivered in a different way. One comment described how a ‘major’ cut to SEN children services were not justified when compared to the ‘minor cut’ being made to the smoking cessation service. Furthermore, the comment followed with a descriptive, claiming there to be no ‘off the shelf’ product available to support SEN needs like there is for smokers accessing nicotine replacement therapy. One comment illustrates that the smoking cessation service is only relevant for smokers and did not add the health promotion and protection of smoking currently marketed. In summary, this comment was followed by a suggestion that the service should no longer be commissioned by West Berkshire Council.

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

None of the responses were users or carers.

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

In summary, the respondent’s comments were that there is no justification as to why one departmental service received more of a higher percentage budget cut than the smoking sensation programme, especially since there is a presence of smoking aids to support individuals.

#### **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?**

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There were two comments put forward against this question and the respondents describe smokers and the NHS being primarily affected as a result of the budget proposals.

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

The two comments describe an already significant public awareness of the disadvantages of smoking and claims the service adds little to the large presence of public awareness already circulated.

**5. 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 comments on these questions.

**6. Any further comments?**

The majority of comments received suggest the service be de-commissioned and that West Berkshire Council redirect the savings to one of the socio-medical services which have seen a reduction in funding for the year.

### Conclusion

There were five respondents to the budget proposals for the smoking cessation service. It was found that 80% of respondents felt that the smoking cessation service be de-commissioned and that savings be re-directed to services which have seen funding be reduced for 16/17. Approximately 40% of respondents felt that there is already a significant amount of public awareness and campaigning being made to highlight the disadvantages of smoking and that this alone would be sufficient delivery method for a smoking cessation in West Berkshire. Finally, respondents have illustrated their concern for other services and how the funding would further benefit other socio-medical cuts, including SEN children's services.

**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.*

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