

Budget Proposals 2016-17: Traffic Management and Road Safety

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, 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 has a statutory duty to provide a Traffic Management and Road Safety Service. This team provides a wide range of services including:

- Dealing with speed limit changes,
- Accident investigation,
- Accident reduction schemes,
- School safety schemes,
- Road closures,
- Traffic Orders,
- Signing and roadmarking maintenance,
- Cycle training,
- Community speed watch,
- Road safety education campaigns as well as investigating and responding to around 150 enquiries every month from members of the public, Councillors and parish councils.

We are proposing to delete one Traffic Management Project Engineer from our team of six officers.

We are also proposing a reduction of £60,000 (40%) in our annual budget of £147,000 for maintaining traffic signs and roadmarkings.

Summary of Key Points

16 responses to the consultation were received. Five of these were from organisations (The West Berkshire Green Party, Pangbourne Parish Council, Tilehurst Parish Council, Lambourn Parish Council and the WBC Transport Services Team). The remaining 11 responses were from individual members of the public. All responses were received from the online consultation portal. No petitions were received.

The main concern (expressed by six respondents) is that a reduction in sign and roadmarking maintenance will lead to road safety problems and potentially more traffic accidents.

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

A number of respondents expressed concerns about the potential for more traffic accidents if less sign and roadmarking maintenance is carried out. One person commented that the budget is already too small for a district the size of West Berkshire.

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?

The majority of respondents felt that this cut will affect all road users equally.

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

Three respondents suggested that Town/Parish Council's, and possibly other local community groups could assist with activities such as sign cleaning which will lessen the impact of this service reduction. One Parish Council suggested that road safety schemes at schools should be paid for by the school concerned.

4. 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 Green Party commented that they are prepared to help raise awareness of these issues. There were no other suggestions.

5. Any further comments?

One Parish Council commented that following a public meeting, parishioners did not seem too concerned about this proposal and as the Police and Council have been ineffective in delivering this service, any reduction would have little effect.

Other comments include 'stopping spending is not saving, it merely pushes the costs on to someone else' and 'this is a drastic cut'.

Conclusion

Relatively few responses were received for the Traffic Management and Road Safety consultation although a significant proportion that did have recognised the implications in respect of reducing standards and the potential for road accidents. However, the feedback has not revealed any new issues.

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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