
Phase 1 Budget Consultation 2016-17 - Summary Report

Committee considering report:	Special Executive on 25 February 2016 Council on 1 March 2016
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Roger Croft
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	1 February 2016
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Forward Plan Ref:	C2979

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the results of Phase 1 of the public consultation exercise in relation to the 2016/17 budget. This report provides information on the total number of responses received to the consultation and details of the total number of responses received for each savings proposal.
- 1.2 This report also provides details where “counter proposals” have been made by organisations and looks at those savings proposals which are currently funded by the public health grant.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the responses received to each of the 47 public facing savings proposals in relation to Phase 1 of the public consultation exercise undertaken on the 2016/17 budget be noted.
- 2.2 That, should transitional funding not be appropriate, Full Council progress each of the non-public health grant funded savings proposals (29 individual proposals in total) and the one income proposal relating to car parking as set out in Appendix A.
- 2.3 That it be a recommendation to Council that those public health grant funded services set out in paragraph 3.4 of Appendix “A” totalling £114,000 be progressed.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Financial:** This report will contribute to and inform the 2016/17 budget report and discussion at Council on 1 March 2016.
- 3.2 **Policy:** N/A
- 3.3 **Personnel:** Some of the savings proposals will have an impact on staff and where this is the case these have been identified and appropriate action taken.
- 3.4 **Legal:** The Public Sector Equality Duty (149 (1) requires a Local Authority in exercise of its functions to have due regard to

the need to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this act.

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The essential duty is that decision makers must keep the welfare of service users at the forefront of their mind, but also families, and especially their families who are most disadvantaged.

3.5 **Risk Management:** N/A

3.6 **Property:** N/A

3.7 **Other:** In relation to the Mortimer to Willink Home to School Transport route the On-Highways aspect has been assessed by our Highways Engineers in accordance with Road Safety GB guidelines. In response to feedback, the Council commissioned a 2nd independent review which also concluded that the On-Highways aspect was suitable as a route to school.

4. **Other options considered**

4.1 The Council is required to consult on its 2016/17 budget by virtue of the Equality Act 2010 and particularly in relation to any proposals which might have a public impact.

5. Executive Summary

- 5.1 In agreeing a balanced budget for 2016/17 the Council was initially required to find a total of £10.8m of savings. Approximately £4.6m of these savings were identified as potentially having a public impact.

6. Consultation Approach

- 6.1 The Council launched Phase 1 of its public consultation on its 2016/17 budget on 3 November 2015. The consultation ran for 6 weeks which concluded on 14 December 2015. A total of 2458 responses were received to the 47 individual savings proposals. Approximately 1,000 of these responses were received in the last week and required a significant effort to make sure that all of the responses were entered on to the system and reflected in this report.
- 6.2 A table showing the number of responses for each proposal is set out in Appendix B to this report along with templates providing an overview and summary of the comments received to each proposal. It should be noted at this stage that it is not the number of responses which should be focused on but the responses to the two questions about impact.
- 6.3 As already stated there were 47 public facing savings proposals for 2016/17 compared to 18 in 2014/15 and 2015/16. The 47 savings proposals represented £4.6m. The consultation was launched with a video of the Chief Executive explaining the financial challenges faced by the Council.
- 6.4 The proposals were published on the Council's consultation finder database with information disseminated to all registered consultees. The proposals were also e mailed round to approximately 900 members of the community panel as well information being posted on Facebook and Twitter accounts. A press release was also issued drawing attention to the public consultation exercise.
- 6.5 Of the 47 public facing savings proposals 18 related to services funded by the public health grant which has been ring fenced by the Government for a further two years. Although the Council has to make savings of £139,000 from the public health grant in 2016/17 it is only proposed to reduce funding to those public facing savings proposals set out in Paragraph 3.4 of Appendix A which totals £114,000.
- 6.6 At the Executive on 11 February 2016 three petitions and a letter were presented requesting the Council to reconsider its proposals to reduce funding in the following areas:
- (i) Short Breaks for Children - The petition contained 3694 signatures.
 - (ii) 143 bus service in Purley and Pangbourne - The petition contained 253 signatures.
 - (iii) 143 bus service in Basildon - The petition contained 352 signatures.
- 6.7 The letter was from the Pangbourne and Whitchurch Sustainability Group supporting the sentiments of the two petitions relating to the 143 bus service.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The public consultation on the 2016/17 budget attracted around 2500 responses. Details of all responses and recommendations are set out in the individual templates and further distilled in the spreadsheet attached to the report.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A - Supporting Information (Main Report)
- 8.2 Appendix B - Summary of Recommendations
- 8.3 Appendix C - Table showing the total number of responses received to each proposal
- 8.4 Appendix D – Overview of Responses and Recommendations, Summary of Responses, Verbatim Responses and Equalities Impact Assessment are published on the 47 individual consultation pages and can be accessed via the central index page for [Budget Proposals 2016/17 Phase One](#).