
2016/17 Revenue Budget Phase 2 Public Consultation and the Transitional Grant - Supporting Information

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The Council, at its meeting on 1 March 2016, set its budget for 2016/17. In setting its budget the Council agreed to hold a special meeting of Council on 24 March so that all of the responses to Phase 2 of the public consultation, which closed on 7 March, could be reviewed and decisions made about whether any of the remaining transition grant for 2016/17 should be allocated to any of those services which were subject to consultation.
- 1.2 This report provides feedback on the results of Phase 2 of the public consultation exercise undertaken 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 responses for each savings proposal and the themes of those responses.
- 1.3 A summary of the total number of responses to each of the proposals is also set out in Appendix B. Appendix C proposes a recommendation for each of the 15 individual savings proposals and the one income proposal relation to car parking fees and charges.
- 1.4 Appendices D and E provide a summary and overview of the responses received to each of the proposals. A further spreadsheet (Appendix F) is also attached which provides the Equality Impact Assessments, verbatim comments and summary of responses for each proposal.

2. Public Consultation

- 2.1 The Council launched its Phase 2 of its public consultation 2016/17 budget on 15 February 2016. The consultation ran for 3 weeks and concluded on 7 March 2016. A total of 7,278 responses were received to the 15 individual savings proposals and the one income proposal relating to car parking. However, of these 7,278 responses 2,297 merely indicated that they were users of a service. For the benefit of the consultation, the feedback will focus on the 4,981 that responded to each of the questionnaires attached to each of the savings proposals.
- 2.2 The 15 individual savings proposals and the one income generation proposal were published on the Council's consultation finder database with information disseminated to all registered consultees. The proposals were also e mailed round to around 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.

- 2.3 All of the organisations impacted by the proposals were also contacted prior to the consultation exercise going live so were aware of the proposals and the potential impact on them.
- 2.4 The consultation asked the following questions:
1. What would be the impact on you or your community?
 2. What can you do to help mitigate this impact?
- 2.5 The consultation exercise generated a great deal of feedback from the public. Section 4 deals with the Equality Impact Assessment aspects of the savings proposals and details the four outcomes which are possible arising from the public consultation. Separate Equality Impact Assessment templates for each of the proposals are attached as Appendix F to this report.

3. Transitional Funding

- 3.1 The transitional funding has been made available by the Government as part of the Council's Local Government Settlement. The Council has received a total of £2.8M of transitional funding over the next two years.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 1 March 2016, the Council made available £395,000 out of a total of £1.4m transitional funding for 2016/17. It has been agreed that the transitional funding, which is only available for two years, should be used in order to respond to the concerns of the residents of West Berkshire and that any funding allocated should be on the basis of that service transitioning to a new model of operation over the course of the next two years.
- 3.3 In responding to the feedback received to the public consultation, it is proposed that the remaining £1m of transitional funding for 2016/17 be made available to those specific services set out below.
- (i) Library Service -£475,000
 - (ii) Theatres (Corn Exchange) - £56,000
 - (iii) Public Transport - £337,000
 - (iv) Children's Centres - £50,000
 - (v) Domestic Abuse Response Team - £25,000
 - (vi) Neighbourhood Wardens - £50,000
 - (vii) Citizen's Advice Bureau - £25,000

4. Equality Impact Assessments

- 4.1 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 characteristics and persons who do not share it.
- 4.2 The essential duty placed on decision makers is that they must keep the welfare of service users at the forefront of their mind, but also families, and especially their families who are most disadvantaged.
- 4.3 The Equality Impact Assessments attached to this report identify the chosen option(s) and their potential impacts and document the reasons for the decision in each of the 47 savings proposals. The following four outcomes are possible from an assessment and more than one may apply to a single proposal:
- (i) No major change is required as the EIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to advance equality have been taken.
 - (ii) Adjustments are needed to remove barriers identified by the assessor or to promote equality (but the local authority has to ask itself if the adjustments will be effective).
 - (iii) Continue despite having identified some potential for adverse impacts or missed opportunities to advance equality.
 - (iv) Stop and rethink if an EIA shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. Is there a way of reducing or mitigating any negative impact?
- 4.4 Members will have carefully considered, assessed and fully understood the implications of any of the responses received to Phase 2 of the savings proposals. Members have already reviewed at length the detailed feedback for each of the proposals.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Phase 2 of the public consultation on the 2016/17 budget attracted around 7,278 responses although only 4,981 completed the relevant questionnaires. This report proposes areas where the remaining £1m of transition funding for 2016/17 may be allocated in response to the concerns raised by residents as part of the consultation.

Background Papers:

The appendices attached to this report are the papers that have been used to formulate this report.

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position

Strategic Aims and Priorities Supported:

The proposals will help achieve the following Council Strategy aim:

MEC – Become an even more effective Council

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priority:

MEC1 – Become an even more effective Council

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