
2016/17 Budget - Phase 2 Consultation and the Transitional Grant

Committee considering report:	Special Council on 24 March 2016
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Roger Croft
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	15 March 2016
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Forward Plan Ref:	C3100

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the results of Phase 2 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 including the one income proposal relating to car parking fees and charges.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the responses received to each of the 15 public facing savings proposals and the one income generation proposal in relation to Phase 2 of the public consultation exercise undertaken on the 2016/17 budget be noted.
- 2.2 That Council make available the remaining 2016/17 transitional funding to those 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
- 2.3 That, where transitional funding is not deemed to be appropriate, the recommendations set out in the Overview and Recommendations template (Appendix C) be approved.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Financial:** The Council has received a transitional grant of £1.39m in 2016/17. As part of considering Phase 1 savings proposals Council agreed to allocate £395K to assist the delivery of

four areas of service. This leaves £1m to assist the delivery of Phase 2 savings as detailed in the report.

- 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:**
- 3.6 **Property:** None
- 3.7 **Other:** 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.

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 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.

Public Consultation

- 5.2 The Council launched Phase 2 of its public consultation on its 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 16 individual savings proposals including one proposal relating to car parking fees and charges. 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.
- 5.3 A table showing the number of responses for each proposal is also set out in Appendix B. A further table providing an overview and recommendation in each case for the 15 individual public facing savings proposals and the one income generation proposal relation to car parking fees and charges is attached as Appendix C along with templates providing an overview and summary (Appendices D and E) of the comments received to each proposal.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 Although the number of responses to anyone savings proposal should not be the determining factor in deciding whether to progress with the proposal or to allocate transition funding, it will be noted that the following four areas attracted the most responses:
- (i) Library Service (2307)
 - (ii) Theatres (1619)
 - (iii) Public Transport (327)
 - (iv) Children's Centres (308)

Transitional Funding

- 5.6 At its meeting on 1 March 2016, the Council made available £395,000 out of a total £1.4m transitional funding for 2016/17. It has been agreed that the transitional funding 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.

5.7 In responding to the feedback from the public consultation, it is proposed that the remaining £1m of transitional funding for 2016/17 is made available to those 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

6. Conclusion

6.1 The public consultation on the 2016/17 budget attracted 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.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix A - Supporting Information
- 7.2 Appendix B - Total number of responses received.
- 7.3 Appendix C - Overview and Recommendations template
- 7.4 Appendices D and E - Overview and summary of response templates
- 7.5 Appendix F - Equalities Impact Assessment