

**Consultation Summary Report**

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**Why we consulted**

Over the last five years, we've had to find savings of £41m. Since 2012/13, the government has given us less money by reducing the Revenue Support Grant by £30m, whilst over the same period we've seen increased demand for our services.

For 2017/18, we estimate that our budget will be £117m. To achieve a balanced budget we'll have to identify £8m of savings or increases in our income.

In order to inform this process, 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 for both savings and income generation

**Approach**

We published all the proposals on our website on 31 October 2016 with feedback requested by midnight on 11 December 2016.

Respondents were directed to a [central index page](#), which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our [Consultation Portal](#).

Each individual page included further details on the specifics of what the proposal contained and what we thought the impact might be, along with any other elements we'd taken into account. Feedback was then invited through an online form and through a dedicated email address. Hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were also made available on request.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 800 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Heads of Service also made direct contact with those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on the 31 October 2016, and further publicised our consultations through our Facebook and Twitter accounts. We also placed posters in our main offices and libraries, and made them available to WBC Councillors and Parish and Town Councils to put up in the wards/parishes.

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### Proposal Background

As the lead organisation for local road safety activity, we've made a significant contribution to the substantial reductions in the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads. We've worked hard over the last few years to continue to provide road safety services while coping with major reductions to our budget. However, with further budget restrictions over the next few years, we must seek to get the most out of every pound spent on our services, and will be making very difficult decisions on where to reduce spending. Road safety cannot be immune to these financial realities, but there are many reasons to protect road safety spending, as much as possible. It is an ethically, socially and economically sound policy area that delivers real cost savings, and improves peoples' lives.

### Proposal Details

To delete one of the two full-time Road Safety Officer posts in our Traffic Management and Road Safety Team. This will result in a saving of approximately £35,000 per annum out of a total budget of £124,000.

We'll still be fulfilling our statutory duty regarding 'Promotion of road safety' as required by legislation.

### Legislation Requirements

While central government sets the regulatory framework for roads, vehicles and road users, and national road safety strategies, road safety delivery occurs primarily at the local level with local government being the lead delivery agent, working in partnership with many other agencies and stakeholders.

Local authorities have various statutory duties related to road safety:

The Road Traffic Act 1988 (Section 39) requires local authorities in Great Britain to:

- take steps both to reduce and prevent accidents
- prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety
- carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads or part of roads, other than trunk roads, within their area
- take such measures as appear to the authority to be appropriate to prevent such accidents

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (Section 122) requires local authorities in Great Britain to:

- secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians)

The Traffic Management Act 2004 (Section 16) requires local authorities in England and Wales to manage and maintain their road networks to:

- secure the expeditious movement of traffic on, and the efficient use of, their road networks

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- avoid, eliminate or reduce road congestion or other disruption to the movement of traffic on their road network or a road network for which another authority is the traffic authority

### Consultation Response

#### Number of Responses

In total, 27 responses were received, 26 of which included comments.

#### Summary of Main Points

Of the 27 responses received 26 included comments. 11 agreed with the proposal, 13 were opposed to it, one neither agreed nor disagreed, one said don't know and one didn't answer the question.

Unison stated that road safety education in schools is being proposed to be reduced or removed altogether and this is at odds with providing better education in an area which can provide life-saving information, and save money overall by raising the standard of our young road users.

10 respondents were particularly concerned about the impact on children / young people who will be missing out on a valuable part of their social education, two mentioned the potential to severely affect people's lives generally and the loss of positive life skills to keep them safe on the highways and one suggested that roads would be less safe with resultant litigation, injuries or deaths.

One respondent thought that many of the safety activities are nice to have, one thought there would be no additional impacts, one thought these activities could be done by volunteers, one thought there was no need for these activities, one thought it is unnecessary expenditure and Thatcham Town Council supports the cut as our statutory duty will be fulfilled.

#### Summary of Responses by Question

##### 1. Are you...?

	Number	%
A resident of West Berkshire	18	66.7%
Employed by West Berkshire Council	7	25.9%
A Parish/Town Councillor	3	11.1%
A District Councillor	0	.0%
A Service Provider	0	.0%
A Partner Organisation	0	.0%
Other	5	18.5%

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### 2. How far do you agree with the proposal to delete one of the two full time Road Safety Officer posts?

	Number	%
Agree	11	40.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	1	3.7%
Disagree	13	48.2%
Don't know	1	3.7%
Not answered	1	3.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3. What do you think we should be aware of in terms of how this proposal might impact people? For example, do you think it will affect particular individuals more than others?

Respondents highlighted negative impacts on the following particular individuals:

- Children (5)
- Children and Vulnerable highway users (6)

### 4. If the decision is taken to proceed with this proposal, do you have any suggestions for how we can reduce the impact on those affected? If so, please provide details.

The following suggestions were identified:

- Charge people over the age of 18 (2)
- Do not proceed with this cut because of the negative consequences (5)
- Identify those most at risk and only deliver to them (1)
- Call for volunteers (1)
- Provide more online content (1)

### 5. Do you have any other suggestions as to how these savings (approximately £35,000) might be delivered within this service? If so, please provide details.

The following suggestions were identified:

- Fund this from public health (1)
- Restructure management instead (1)
- Investigate sponsorship opportunities (2)
- Reduce the number of councillors and expenses that can be claimed (1)

### 6. Do you have any suggestions on how we might increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council?

The following suggestions were identified:

- Increase council tax (4)
- Generate income by outsourcing / charging for our services (3)
- Share road safety services with other local authorities (1)

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**7. 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 offers to contribute from individuals or organisations other than from one respondent who said that she could teach her children how to cross roads safely and when they are old enough, how to be considerate and careful drivers and cyclists.

There was also one response from a school governor suggesting that governor services could ask for volunteers to assist with some tasks.

**8. Any further comments?**

The following individual comments were made:

- There have been enough cuts already and the council should not reduce the services it provides any further.
- You really need to think carefully before you reach your decision as lives are more important than money.
- Get funding from local corporate companies who may sponsor day glow jackets for children etc. Our children are precious; changes should not affect them at any cost. Cycling proficiency courses taken at school are hugely important, where are our stop look and listen campaigns from the 80's which are still relevant now. We have less lolly pop people helping our kids to cross major roads.
- I feel that road safety is hugely important and no changes should happen that could affect our children up to the age of 18. Cycling proficiency should also be a priority and we have to make sure that our children are equipped to be safe near our ever increasingly busy roads.

Officer conclusion and recommendation can be found in the associated Overview of Responses and Recommendations document.

Mark Edwards  
Head of Service  
Highways and Transport  
20 December 2016

**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.*