

Budget Proposals 2019/20: Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations for Executive on 14 February 2019

Savings Proposals

Proposal Title	Proposal Description	Total Budget 2018/19	Initial Proposed Saving 2019/20	Recommended Saving 2019/20	Conclusion and Recommendation
Adult Substance Misuse Service (Swanswell)	To reduce the annual funding to Swanswell from 1 April 2019	£585,940	£45,000 (8%)	£0	<p>Most respondents disagreed with the proposal and pointed out that it will have an impact across the NHS, social care, police and local communities. A number of respondents also felt that the service is currently running to capacity and were concerned that access to the most vulnerable groups would be restricted further.</p> <p>It is recommended that this proposal is not progressed.</p>
Age UK Handyperson Service	To cease the annual funding to the Age UKs Handyperson Service when the contract ends on 31 March 2019	£19,125	£19,125 (100%)	£0	<p>Most of the respondents to this consultation are strongly against the cut. There is concern about the effect on this vulnerable group of people.</p> <p>It is recommended that this proposal is not progressed.</p>
Alcohol Screening and Brief Advice Service	To cease the annual funding to the Alcohol Screening and Brief Advice Service from 1 April 2019	£21,300	£21,300 (100%)	£21,300 (100%)	<p>It is clear that by removing the funding for this service, there is a potential risk of fewer individuals being identified as drinking at harmful levels and offered an intervention at an early stage.</p> <p>However, there is no evidence to suggest that this service is proving to support the health and wellbeing outcomes of individuals who are found to be at moderate to high risk of alcohol related health conditions.</p> <p>As a result of the responses received, it is recommended that the service is decommissioned and the council continue to support GP Practices and the wider NHS to identify and support individuals who drink at harmful levels as part of routine care.</p>
Cancer Rehabilitation Programme	To cease the annual funding of the cancer rehabilitation programme from 1 April 2019	£8,290	£8,290 (100%)	£0	<p>There has been some confusion regarding the current charging for the cancer classes. It has become clear that participants are not charged for the initial 12 weeks of classes. However, following on from this they are directed to a more general exercise referral class, which they do pay for. The consultation has not accurately described this process and based on this information it is recommended that this proposal is not progressed at this time.</p>
Eat4Health (Adult weight management service)	To reduce the annual funding to Eat4Health from 1 April 2019	£56,575	£16,575 (29%)	£16,575 (29%)	<p>Obesity continues to be one of the greatest public health challenges facing our society. We believe that the existing weight management service can be delivered in more cost effective way through greater online support and the introduction of a new weight management service from Autumn 2019. It is anticipated that the new service will enable more people to access a weight management service and provide greater value for money.</p> <p>We also believe that the introduction of the NHS funded National Diabetes Prevention Programme will provide alternative weight management provision for individuals at risk of diabetes.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that this proposal is progressed.</p>
Get Berkshire Active	<p>To reduce the annual funding to Get Berkshire Active (Community Based Leisure and Recreational Activities programme) when the current contract ends on 31 March 2019.</p> <p>We propose that we will commission a new re shaped service that which will continue to</p>	£90,641	£40,000 (44%)	£40,000 (44%)	<p>Although the majority of the respondents disagreed with this proposal, feedback has not identified any issues which would prevent the council from progressing with it.</p> <p>Some of the activities are already running in a sustainable format through support from partners including Legacy Leisure. Therefore, it is felt that this element of the programme does not require continued funding for these activities to continue.</p>

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	provide some community based leisure and recreational activities. However, physical activity specifically for older people will no longer be funded as part of this service.				<p>The physical activity specifically delivered by Get Berkshire Active for older people e.g. the kits supplied for home use were not in demand, or well used.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that this proposal is progressed and that residents are signposted to other existing physical activity opportunities across West Berkshire.</p> <p>It is also recommended that a new reshaped service be commissioned, which will continue to provide some community based leisure and recreational activities, support, advice and social activities.</p>
Mencap Family Advisor Service	<p>To reduce the annual funding to the Mencap Family Advisor Service from 1 April 2019.</p> <p>We propose to retender for an information and advice service for the families of people with learning disabilities with this reduced level of funding once the contract with Mencap ends on 31 March 2019</p>	£15,750	£3,000 (19%)	£3,000 (19%)	<p>All of the respondents to this consultation are against the proposal. There is concern about the effect on this vulnerable group of people. Nonetheless, there is a need to identify savings for the council. This is a relatively small reduction and the service will still be available. Other sources of advice, information and advocacy are also available.</p> <p>It is recommended that this proposal is progressed.</p>
Mental Health First Aid Training	<p>To cease subsidising the current Mental Health First Aid training programme and to deliver the training through a 'West Berkshire Wellbeing' traded serviceⁱ from 1 April 2019</p> <p>All delegates will pay for courses.</p>	£8,500	£8,500 (100%)	£8,500 (100%)	<p>We have invested in MHFA significantly since 2014 and we are proud that we now have over 600 people trained in MHFA. There is still work to be done in terms of raising awareness, reducing stigma and preventing mental health problems and we will continue to work with our partner organisations, the Mental Health Action Group and Public health England to ensure that this work will continue.</p> <p>In light of the responses, it is recommended that this proposal is progressed.</p>
Relate (Newbury)	To reduce the annual funding to Relate from 1 April 2019	£6,468	£1,500 (23%)	£1,500 (23%)	<p>There is nothing that has come out of the public consultation which would prevent the council from proceeding with its proposal and it is therefore recommended that this proposal is progressed.</p>
Smoking Cessation Service (Smoke Free Life)	To reduce the annual funding to Smokefreelife from 1 April 2019	£201,000	£100,000 (50%)	£100,000 (30%)	<p>Whilst smoking is one of the leading causes of premature death and health inequalities in West Berkshire, we have seen a dramatic fall in smoking rates over the last five years with fewer individuals seeking support. However, it is often the most vulnerable in our society who need greater support to help them reduce the harm caused by tobacco.</p> <p>There is nothing in the responses to the consultation relating to this savings proposal which would prevent the council from proceeding. It is recommended this proposal is progressed.</p>
Special Needs Advice and Counselling Support Service (SNACS)	To reduce the annual funding to the SNACS Service from 1 April 2019	£10,000	£2,000 (20%)	£0	<p>It is acknowledged that users of this service have found it very beneficial. It is also acknowledged that it is helpful for parents who have disabled children to be able to access support from a counsellor who has specific knowledge of disability.</p> <p>A reduction of £2,000 would mean a reduction by 20% of families who can access the service. Whilst this is regrettable, there is access to counselling through other sources, including the NHS, via GPs, and through voluntary agencies.</p> <p>This is a service which is not available in other areas, as far as we know.</p> <p>It is recommended that this proposal is not progressed.</p>

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Supported Employment for People with Disabilities	<p>To reduce the annual funding to the Supported Employment Scheme from 1 April 2019</p> <p>We propose to re-tender for a Supported Employment Scheme with this reduced level of funding once the contract has ended on 31 March 2019</p>	£60,000	£15,000 (25%)	£0	<p>Most of the respondents to this consultation are strongly against the cut. There is concern about the effect on this vulnerable group of people.</p> <p>It is recommended that this proposal is not progressed.</p>
Volunteer Centre West Berkshire	To reduce the annual funding to the VCWB from 1 April 2019	£20,028	£5,000 (25%)	£5,000 (25%)	<p>Whilst it is clear that the VCWB do provide services which are much thought of by those that use them, most notably the elderly, the consultation has not provided any information which would suggest that the council should not proceed with its proposal. It should be noted that the council has recognised the valuable services that VCWB provides and to this end has protected them from any budget reductions to date unlike many other voluntary and community sector organisations.</p> <p>The current economic climate is continuing to require the council and those that it funds to make difficult financial decisions.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that this proposal is progressed.</p>

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Income Proposal

Proposal Title	Proposal Description	Total Income 2018/19	Initial Expected Income 2019/20	Expected Income 2019/20	Conclusion and Recommendation
Planning and Transport Policy Advice	<p>To introduce the following charges:</p> <p>(a) From 1 April 2019, any request to meet with policy officers (transport or planning) to discuss anything relating to a site specific issue will incur a charge</p> <p>(b) From 1 October 2019, anyone wishing to appear on the Self Build Register (part 1 or part 2)ⁱⁱ will be charged an annual fee of £100 + VAT.</p> <p>This fee will apply to anyone who is currently on the register</p>	£nil	£10,000	£10,000	<p>Given the extensive communication regarding these proposals the response rate is a little disappointing.</p> <p>There is no clear view on the introduction of charge for consulting with Planning Policy. However there is a degree of agreement that planning policy and development management should be treated in similar ways, and therefore it is recommended that the fees are introduced.</p> <p>In relation to the proposed charge for the Self-Build register, it is clear that most respondents clearly do not want the introduction of the charge. The National Custom and Self Build Association believe that the approach could result in West Berkshire not complying with legislative requirements. However, Regulation 3 (1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding (Time for Compliance and Fees) Regulations 2016 provides that a relevant authority may charge a fee to a person to be entered on the register (for a base period or part of a base period and thereafter) and then on an annual basis, to remain on that register irrespective of whether any fee was charged to be entered on the register in the first place.</p> <p>One respondent was happy for the charge, provided it led to some positive action regarding how the council treated the issue of self-builders.</p> <p>In going through the comments and looking at the legislation once more, the Self-Build Register runs from 1 November until the 31 October. While no respondent highlighted that if the charge was imposed on the 1 October, a second fee of £100 would be due on the first of November. If left unchanged this would expose the council to opportunism and potentially represent a significant reputational risk to council.</p> <p>It is recommended that the fees for Self-Build Register are introduced with a minor modification, in that they run from the 1 November to the 31 October each year.</p>

ⁱ <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/westberkswellbeing>

ⁱⁱ <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/selfbuild>