

Budget Proposals 2019/20: Relate (Newbury)

Consultation Summary Report

Why we consulted?

Over the last nine years we've had to make savings of £60 million as our central government funding, the Revenue Support Grant (RSG), has reduced and the need for social care support has increased. We've done this by becoming more efficient at what we do, by reducing some of our administrative functions and increasing our income. Throughout this period we have done our best to protect your services.

Six years ago, the RSG was worth £24 million to the council and was reduced to just £100,000 last year. In 2019/20 there will be no grant and our costs will exceed our income. As a result, we'll need to find a further £7 million in savings or income generation. Much of this will come from becoming a more efficient council, however, 14 proposals, amounting to approximately £300,000, have been identified from services that will impact the public.

It was these proposals that made up the Budget Proposals 2019/20 consultation.

Approach

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on 12 November 2018 with feedback requested by midnight on 23 December 2018.

Respondents were directed to a central index pageⁱ, which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation Portalⁱⁱ.

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 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 400 people) 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 12 November 2018, and further publicised our consultations through our Facebook and Twitter accounts. We also placed posters in our main offices and other council properties e.g. libraries, and made them available to WBC Councillors and Parish and Town Councils to put up in the wards/parishes.

Proposal Background

Relate is a charity providing relationship support throughout the UK. Services delivered in West Berkshire through Relateⁱⁱⁱ include:

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- Relationship counselling for individuals and couples either face-to-face, via telephone, webcam or online.^{iv}
- Counselling for families, for example to help when siblings aren't getting on or parents and children are going through a divorce.^v
- Mediation to help couples make arrangements during or following a divorce or separation.^{vi}
- Counselling for children and young people who might be experiencing difficulties at school or with parents, or who have mental health concerns.^{vii}
- Sex therapy for those experiencing difficulties and wish to improve physical intimacy.^{viii}
- Workshops for people at important stages in their life and relationships, for example professional development.^{ix}

Relate have a network of centres^x across the UK, and a group of licensed local counsellors that provide face-to-face counselling and support. They also provide phone, email and live chat counselling so clients can choose the support that works for them.

Nationally, the average cost of a counselling session is £49, however each centre sets its own charges. There are a network of individual counsellors who work in private practice, but are licensed by Relate and set their own fees. Telephone and webcam counselling is charged at £55 per hour. Live Chat is free, with a session usually lasting about 25 minutes.^{xi}

We currently provide Relate (Newbury) with annual funding of £6,468.

Legislation Requirements

These services aren't statutory, but help to support the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Proposal Details

To reduce the annual funding to Relate from £6,468 to £4,968 (a saving of £1,500 or 23%) from 1 April 2019.

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Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, eight responses were received, although one of those responding did not complete the questionnaire.

One of the respondents identified themselves as a user of the service, seven as residents, one as a Parish/Town Councillor, one as a partner organisation, and two as other.

Summary of Main Points

Four of the residents that responded either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposal, whilst two agreed. One partner organisation disagreed with the proposal.

The main reasons cited by those that disagreed with the proposal were:

- It's such a small saving for WBC, but could push up incidence of mental health issues.
- These services shouldn't just be provided to those that can afford it.
- The service offers such value to couples in the area that the almost insignificant saving means this is a service best left alone.

Those that agreed with the proposal thought that the council should not have to pay for the service.

Summary of Responses by Question

1. Are you...?

(N.B. respondents were able to tick more than one option)

	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Or anyone you care for, a user of this service	1	8.3%	12.5%
A resident of West Berkshire	7	58.3%	87.5%
Employed by West Berkshire Council	0	.0%	.0%
A Parish/Town Councillor	1	8.3%	12.5%
A District Councillor	0	.0%	.0%
A service provider	0	.0%	.0%
A partner organisation	1	8.3%	12.5%
Other	2	16.7%	25.0%

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2. **How far do you agree with the proposal to reduce the annual funding to Relate from £6,468 to £4,968 from 1 April 2019?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly agree	2	25.0	28.6
Agree	0	.0	.0
Neither agree nor disagree	0	.0	.0
Disagree	2	25.0	28.6
Strongly disagree	3	37.5	42.9
Total	7	87.5	100.0
Not answered	1	12.5	
Total	8	100.0	

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?**

Some of the responses received have suggested that families in most need will be impacted. However, those that supported the proposal suggested that people needing to access this service should pay the “going rate”.

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.**

There were no suggestions forthcoming.

5. **Do you have any suggestions on how we might save money or increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council? If so, please provide details.**

One respondent suggested that the council was becoming too small and needed to work more closely with other councils.

6. **If you, your community group, or organisation think you might be able to help reduce the impact of this proposal, if the decision is taken to proceed with it, please provide your name and email address below.**

One respondent provided their contact details.

7. **Any further comments?**

No other comments were forthcoming.

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

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Andy Day
Head of Strategic Support
03/01/2018

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.

i <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/budgetproposals>

ii <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/consultations>

iii <https://www.relate.org.uk/>

iv <http://www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-relationships/relationship-counselling>

v <http://www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-family-life-and-parenting/family-counselling>

vi <http://www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-separation-and-divorce/mediation>

vii <http://www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-children-and-young-people/children-and-young-peoples-counselling>

viii <http://www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-sex/sex-therapy>

ix <https://www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/workshops>

x <https://www.relate.org.uk/find-your-nearest-relate>

xi <https://www.relate.org.uk/about-us/faqs/how-much-does-counselling-cost>

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2019/20: Relate (Newbury)		Head of Service: Andy Day		5 March 2019	
		Author:		Version 1 (Full Council)	
Proposal:	To reduce the annual funding to Relate from £6,468 to £4,968 (a saving of £1,500 or 23%) from 1 April 2019.				
Total budget 2018/19:	£6,468	Initial proposed saving 2019/20	£1,500 (23%)	Recommended saving 2019/20	£1,500 (23%)
No. of responses:	<p>In total, eight responses were received although one of those responding did not complete the survey. Of those that responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One identified themselves as a user of the service • Seven as residents of West Berkshire • One as a Parish/Town Council • One as a partner organisation • Two as other 				
Key issues raised:	<p>Four of the residents that responded either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposal, whilst two agreed. One partner organisation disagreed with the proposal.</p> <p>The main reasons cited by those that disagreed with the proposal were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's such a small saving for WBC, but could push up incidence of mental health issues. • These services shouldn't just be provided to those that can afford it. • The service offers such value to couples in the area that the almost insignificant saving means this is a service best left alone. <p>Those that agreed with the proposal thought that the council should not have to pay for the service.</p>				
Equality issues:	No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the stage one Equality Impact Assessment.				

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report and Verbatim Responses received in relation to this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation Portal](#).

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response
	No suggestions were forthcoming.	
Suggestions for saving money or increasing income:	Suggestion	Council response
	Work with other council's to save on costs	This option is not currently being considered.
Conclusion and recommendation:	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.	

NB: This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report and Verbatim Responses received in relation to this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our [Consultation Portal](#).

Stage One Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA 1)

What is the proposed decision?	To reduce the annual funding to Relate from £6,468 to £4,968 (a saving of £1,500 or 23%) from 1 April 2019.
Summary of relevant legislation	N/A
Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the council's key strategic priorities?	No
Name of budget holder	Andy Day
Name of Service and Directorate	Strategic Support, Resources Directorate
Name of assessor	Andy Day
Date of assessment	02/10/2018
Version and release date (if applicable)	V2. 14/01/2019

Is this a...?		Is this policy, strategy, function or service...?	
Policy	No	New or proposed	No
Strategy	No	Existing and being reviewed	Yes
Function	No	Changing	Yes
Service	Yes		



1. What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	
Objectives:	Relate's objectives are to work with individuals and couples to improve their relationships in order, very often, to keep the family together.
Outcomes:	Less families breaking up which, in turn, helps to improve the health and wellbeing of those concerned.
Benefits:	Healthier families avoiding the need for potential intervention services.

2. Which groups may be affected and how? Is it positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this?		
Group affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this
Age	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other	
Disability	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other	
Gender reassignment	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other	
Marriage and civil partnership	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other	
Pregnancy and maternity	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other	
Race	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other	



Religion or belief	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other	
Sex	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other	
Sexual orientation	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other	
Further comments		
The services provided by Relate are available to all. There is a charge made by Relate and this may impact on those who are on low incomes or those if financial difficulties.		

3. Result	
Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	No
The services provided by Relate are available to all and do not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics.	
Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	No
The services provided by Relate support and improve the lives of individuals and families.	

4. Next steps	
EqlA 2 required?	No
Owner of EqlA 2	
Timescale for EqlA 2	

Number of responses: 8 (including 1 incomplete)

ID	How far do you agree with the proposal to reduce the annual funding to Relate from £6,468 to £4,968 from 1 April 2019?		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? Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) to see what has already been identified.	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.	Do you have any suggestions on how we might save money or increase income, either in this service, or elsewhere in the council? If so, please provide details.	Any further comments?
	Response	Please tell us the reason(s) for your response.				
1	Disagree	The proposed reduction in funding is such a small saving to WBC but could push up the incidence of mental health issues within families and individuals.		Ask the people at Relate to tell you how to reduce the impact.		
2	Disagree					
3	Strongly disagree	You have already made huge and sustained cuts to many support services over the last few years which in many cases have hit the needy the hardest. It's time to stop this, and to focus limited funds on those who need them most. I cannot support any of the above cuts and urge you to find savings elsewhere or re-allocate funds from areas that will not impact the disadvantaged.				
5	Strongly agree					
6	Strongly disagree	If you're looking at reducing individual services by such small amounts, then we must really be in crisis. The time it's taken someone to think this through and do the paperwork has already eaten into any saving. As school budgets are so tight, families HAVE to be able to look elsewhere for support at difficult times. We can't just provide this sort of service (and some of the others you're consulting on) to people who can afford them.	See previous comment. People who can't afford to pay for this sort of service will just have to struggle on. How can we do this to people? Relationship and family stresses and breakdown will then impact on all other services, so it's a false economy. I strongly feel we should be spending MORE on this kind of support. Otherwise what sort of a community are we?	No I don't. It's getting to the stage where the tiny amounts of money mean that realistically you won't actually be providing a service at all. It's time to say that all 'efficiencies' have been made.	You need to work together much more effectively with other councils. WBerks is becoming too small to provide a proper service, and we have too small a voice.	
7	Strongly disagree	Relate offer such value to couples in the area that the small costs to WBC and almost insignificant saving means this is a service best left alone. Other area's like cessation of smoking make a much bigger saving allowing this valuable service to go unaltered.	Retentions of families in the area leads to overall benefit. Families and stability is what will help WBC the most. This impact most the people who would benefit WBC most.	None - I urge you not to go ahead with this.	Relate have a series of exercises and helping them digitise some of this would help them and in turn WBC. This could be monetized as a pay as you go service.	none
8	Strongly agree	I do not think this service should be paid for by West Berkshire council at all	no	they can pay the going rate for counselling like every one else has to	remove all of the funding provided by the council	