

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2024/25: Restructure funding for Adult Social Care (ASC) transport services		Service Director: Paul Coe Author: Jo England		8 February 2024 Version 1 (Scrutiny Commission)	
Proposal:	To remove transport to and from the day services as part of an individual's care package and to offer a transport service that will be charged at a flat rate of £5.00 per journey (one way) for those individuals that are unable to get to the day services by another means, for example, taken by family or public transport.				
Total budget 2023/24:	£410,000	Initial proposed saving 2024/25:	£200,000	Recommended saving 2024/25:	£200,000
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 59 responses were received via this proposal. The breakdown of responses is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 - A user of the service • 37 - A resident to West Berkshire • 0 – A visitor to West Berkshire • 1 - A West Berkshire business owner • 3 - Employed by a West Berkshire business • 2 - Employed by West Berkshire Council • 2 - A Parish/Town Councillor • 0 - A District Councillor • 2 - A partner organisation • 1 - A West Berkshire Council service provider • 8 - Other <p>We also received no petitions, and 9 responses were inadvertently responded to via the community transport proposal.</p>				
Key issues raised:	Those individuals that strongly disagreed or disagreed to the proposal did so on the basis that it would have an adverse financial impact on individuals and individuals may choose to not go to the day centre that could lead to social isolation or carers could go into crisis.				

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	<p>Those individuals who strongly agreed or agreed considered it reasonable for those individuals who were in receipt of a mobility element of either Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment to be charged a flat rate fee for the transport they used.</p> <p>There were several suggestions of either a lower flat rate fee each way or that the fee proposed should be for a return journey and not each way.</p> <p>Some of the respondents felt that the proposal would affect older people less than it would affect younger people with either a learning disability or Autism, whereas other respondents felt that this was the other way around.</p> <p>There was also concern that it would stop vulnerable individuals from having contact with other people and would lead to social isolation or carer breakdown.</p> <p>There was also a suggestion that carers would have to give up working if this proposal went ahead as they would have to look after the vulnerable individual rather than them going to the day centre.</p>		
Equality issues:	No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Reduce the proposed cost	Reducing the proposed cost, you reduce the amount of income we could generate, and we would have to find savings elsewhere	
	Transition the change and provide plenty of notice	If the proposals go ahead then individuals will be given 4 weeks notice of the proposed changes. Transitioning the change will reduce the amount of income generated.	

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	Use minibuses instead of taxis	This could reduce the costs but due to where individuals live and their needs we often have to use taxis as shared transport is not an option.	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Privatise the 3 West Berkshire owned Day Centres	The 3 day centres owned by the Council do not run at a loss and already bring in an income	

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	Consider not doing other projects like the Wharf	This project is funded by capital not revenue money and the initial phase is grant funded	
	No more bikes lanes	Most highways work is either capital or grant funded and is part of National Policy.	
	Ensure individuals that have Motability cars use them instead of the transport	This would be part of the new proposal.	
	Reduce the amount of unnecessary staff	Adult Social Care has already removed any unnecessary posts.	
	Reduce the heating in offices and schools	Many of the Schools in West Berkshire manage their own finances so we have no control over what they spend their money on. In the last 18 months we have reduced our office accommodation to save money with many staff now working from home.	
	Reduce home to school transport	This is already being reviewed.	
	Charge more Council Tax	In order to charge more Council Tax, the Council would have to do a referendum as Council Tax is already increased by the maximum amount each year.	
Officer conclusion and recommendation	While some people disagree with this proposal it is not a statutory duty to provide transport as part of an individual's care package and we are not proposing to stop the service. If individuals do not have then appropriate benefit to pay for transport, then the additional expenditure they incur can be taken into account in the financial assessment for their contribution towards their care package.		

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as a result of the responses:	The recommendation of Adult Social Care is to proceed with this proposal.	

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