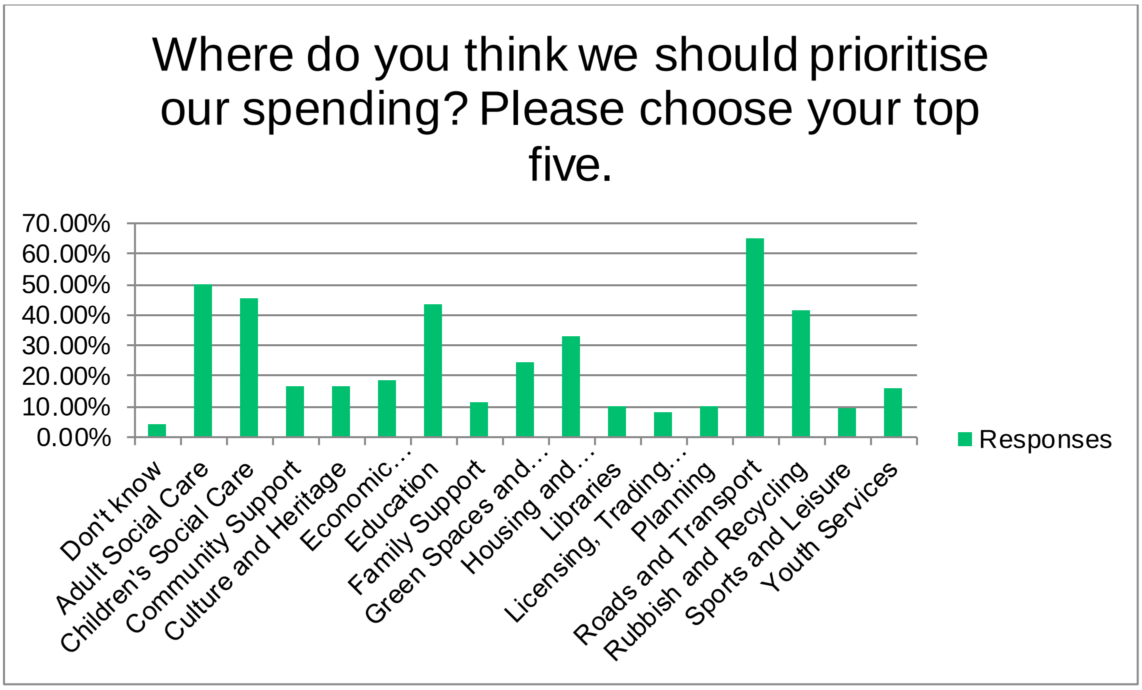
**Appendix I - Budget Consultation response summary**

The Council undertook a budget consultation on a range of proposed savings between 11 November 2024 and 23 December 2024. Overall, the Council received 1,717 initial responses to this online consultation and the results are disclosed below:

| **Name of Proposal** | Number of responses |
|---|---|
| Explore options to deliver Adult Social Care (ASC) Resource Centre services through an alternative provider or in a different way | 175 |
| Increase some Adult Social Care (ASC) fees and charges above the rate of inflation | 56 |
| Create a voluntary charitable contribution (via Council Tax payments) scheme | 89 |
| Cease providing the Adult Respite in the Community (ARC) Service | 48 |
| Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract | 180 |
| Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am | 505 |
| Discontinue the mobile library service | 143 |
| Reduce the number of winter gritting routes | 161 |
| Remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract | 207 |
| We'd also like to hear your views on where to focus spending, and an overall 5% increase in fees | 153 |
| **Total** | **1,717** |

The Council also received responses from members of the public during the consultation period in addition to other individual responses. All responses have been considered in the individual responses included as appendices to this paper.

In respect of the overall priorities for spending, 138 responses were provided within the summary below. The top five areas of focus were Roads and Transport, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, Education and Rubbish and Recycling.




As a result of the consultation exercise, the following changes to, or continuation with current proposals, have been made to the proposed savings for Full Council to consider as part of the Budget setting recommendations. Where cost savings are lower than the proposed amount, this places a need for further savings to be delivered elsewhere across the Council and these amounts are included within the overall budget papers:

| Proposal | Original saving proposed | Revised savings proposed | Summary from the consultation exercise | Further Equality Impact Assessment? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Explore options to deliver Adult Social Care (ASC) Resource Centre services through an alternative provider or delivery method | £469k | £469k | Progress as per proposal | Yes |
| Increase some Adult Social Care (ASC) fees and charges above the | £100k | £100k | Progress per initial proposal | Yes |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| rate of inflation | | | | |
| Create a voluntary charitable contribution (via Council Tax payments) scheme | £200k | £200k | Progress per initial proposal | No |
| Cease providing the Adult Respite in the Community (ARC) Service | £28k | £nil | Not to progress | No |
| Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract | £20k | £10k to £30k | Progress per initial proposal | No |
| Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am | £52k | £40k | Revised proposal to further dim lights from 10pm to 6am to all residential lighting (it is currently applied to half of the residential lighting at present) with no full switch off | No |
| Discontinue the mobile library service | £42k | £42k | Progress per initial proposal | No |
| Reduce the number of winter gritting routes | £40k | £40k | Progress per initial proposal | No |
| Remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management contract | £30k | £nil | Remove proposal | No |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| We'd also like to hear your views on where to focus spending, and an overall 5% increase in fees | n/a | n/a | Progress with fees and charges increase of 5% | No |

The Council also undertook a separate public consultation regarding the Draft Waste Management Strategy, which took place between 25 September and 6 November 2024. One of the proposals in that related to the proposal to reduce the collection frequencies of general refuse (black bins) collections from households. A full summary and report on the Draft Waste Management Strategy will be published in due course.

The consultation survey was completed by 5,073 respondents, including 5,039 residents (approx. 7% of households in the district), 9 parish councils, 30 businesses, 10 local organisations, and 19 visitors.

Opinions on black bin collection schedules were divided. While some residents expressed satisfaction with the current (fortnightly) frequency, others called for more frequent collections to manage waste volumes, particularly for larger households and families. It is proposed as part of the budget proposals, to move to a 3 weekly collection.

A number of potential impacts to equity were identified as a result of the consultation, and this proposal will therefore have a further Equity Impact review.

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**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Explore options to deliver Adult Social Care (ASC) Resource Centre services through an alternative provider or in a different way**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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## Why we consulted?

Councils across the country continue to face unprecedented financial pressures, West Berkshire Council is no exception. Post the COVID pandemic, Councils including West Berkshire have experienced a high inflation environment, resulting in increasing costs and rising demand on our social services supporting our most vulnerable residents.

In 2025/26, we need to find £12.1 million in savings or income generation. This figure assumes that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £10.4 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.2 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified nine proposals.

For more information, please visit https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget

## Approach

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on Monday, 11 November 2024 with feedback requested by midnight on Monday, 23 December 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index page[i], which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hub[ii].

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 considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

A few meetings were requested with family members, staff and Learning Disability Day Service Providers, and all were encouraged to respond to the consultation.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 11 November 2024, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We

also placed posters in our main offices and made them available to Services to put up as required.

**Proposal Background**

West Berkshire Council is currently reviewing its Adult Social Care Services to ensure we can deliver value for money and meet the needs of our residents. We currently run three Resource Centres for adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, frailty and dementia. The centres are open five days a week, Monday to Friday, and offer a range of occupational, creative and therapeutic activities with dedicated staff.

- **Greenfield House Resource Centre** is located at High View in Calcot and can support up to 20 people per day. There are currently 15.62 full time equivalent staff posts.
- **Hungerford Resource Centre** is located on Ramsbury Drive in Hungerford and can support up to 20 people per day. There are currently 13.82 full time equivalent staff posts.
- **The Phoenix Resource Centre** is located on Newtown Road in Newbury and can support up to 30 people per day. There are currently 18.19 full time equivalent staff posts.

It costs the Council approximately 60% more to provide these services than it does the private sector.

The Adult Social Care Management Team and the Council's Executive assess our current provision as follows:

- **Greenfield House Resource Centre** is a service we expect to be in high demand in the coming years. The property is owned by the Council and has a covenant which restricts use and access to business hours (8.30am to 5pm). The average usage in 2023-24 was 86% and the current usage is 100%.
- **Hungerford Resource Centre** is a service for which there is a reducing demand despite trying to promote the Centre. The property is owned by the Council and has a covenant which restricts use to business hours. The average usage in 2023-24 was 56% and the current usage is 66%.
- **The Phoenix Resource Centre** is a service we expect to be in high demand in the coming years. The property is owned by the Council and has a vacant parcel of land adjoining it. This building is the newest of the three centres. The average usage in 2023-24 was 84% and the current usage is 100%.

All three properties have been refurbished within the last 12-18 months.

**Legislative and Statutory Requirements**

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Explore options to deliver Adult Social Care (ASC) Resource Centre services through an alternative provider or in a different way**

## Consultation Summary Report

Under the Care Act 2014 there is no statutory requirement for the Local Authority to operate Resource Centres. Identified eligible needs can be met through services commissioned through external providers.

The Care Act requires Local Authorities to help develop a market that delivers a wide range of sustainable high-quality care and support services, that will be available to their communities.

## Proposal Details

To source an external provider to run each of the Resource Centres, with a cost of provision more aligned to that in the private sector. This could include agreement to rent the buildings. If an alternative provider is not found, we will look to provide the services in a different way.

We would expect annual budget savings of £469,000.

## Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 175 responses were received.

Summary of Main Points

Key feedback on West Berkshire's resource centres includes:

1. **Staffing and Management**: Call for dedicated managers and better staff recognition.
2. **Closures and Mergers**: Proposals to merge centres (Phoenix, Greenfield, Hungerford) and repurpose underused spaces for income generation.
3. **Transport Services**: Suggestions to reduce costs with personal budgets and re-routing.
4. **Funding**: Advocating zero-based budgeting, exploring external funding, and income generation through community activities.
5. **Service Improvements**: Expanding services to include mental health and dementia care and forming partnerships with charities.
6. **Public Sentiment**: Concerns about privatization, with emphasis on transparency and maintaining care quality.

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Explore options to deliver Adult Social Care (ASC) Resource Centre services through an alternative provider or in a different way**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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**1. Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 121 | 69.14% |
| A user of the service | 27 | 15.43% |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 1 | 0.57% |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 5 | 2.86% |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 7 | 4.00% |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 47 | 26.86% |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 4 | 2.29% |
| A District Councillor | 1 | 0.57% |
| A partner organisation | 1 | 0.57% |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 5 | 2.86% |
| Other - please specify below: | 11 | 6.29% |

**2. Which of our Resource Centres do you use? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | |
|---|---|---|
| Greenfield House | 106 | |
| Hungerford | 24 | |
| Phoenix | 15 | |
| None of the above | 37 | |

170 respondents answered question 2

**3. How far do you travel to use our Resource Centres (single journey)?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 5 miles | 31 | 47.69% |
| 5 – 10 miles | 16 | 24.62% |
| 11 – 15 miles | 11 | 16.92% |
| 16 – 20 miles | 6 | 9.23% |
| More than 20 miles | 1 | 1.54% |
| **Total** | **65** | **100%** |

## 4. How often do you attend our Resource Centres?

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Every weekday | 23 | 36.51% |
| A few times a week | 24 | 38.10% |
| Once a week | 12 | 19.05% |
| A few times a month | 0 | 0.00% |
| Less than once a month | 4 | 6.35% |
| **Total** | **63** | **100%** |

## 5. Do you pay to use our Resource Centres?

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 33 | 54.10% |
| No | 28 | 45.90% |
| **Total** | **61** | **100%** |

## 6. Do you use any other day services?

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 7 | 11.67% |
| No | 53 | 88.33% |
| **Total** | **60** | **100%** |

## 7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to source an external provider to run each of the Resource Centres?

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 15 | 10.14% |
| Agree | 27 | 18.24% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 31 | 20.95% |
| Disagree | 18 | 12.16% |
| Strongly Disagree | 57 | 38.51% |
| **Total** | **148** | **100%** |

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

The feedback expresses significant concern over the potential outsourcing of services, emphasizing the negative impact on vulnerable service users, particularly those with learning disabilities, dementia, or physical disabilities. Key concerns include:

1. **Unsettling for Service Users**: Vulnerable individuals may struggle with changes in routine, leading to distress, particularly those with dementia or high needs.
2. **Financial and Accessibility Issues**: Outsourcing may make services less affordable, particularly for middle-income families, increasing the risk of service users needing more expensive care.
3. **Staff and Job Concerns**: The uncertainty surrounding staff roles and potential devaluation of their work could lead to staff turnover, negatively impacting service quality.
4. **Loss of Community Support**: Day services provide crucial respite for carers and foster community connections; disruptions could lead to increased stress on families.
5. **Quality of Care**: Concerns about private providers prioritizing profit over care, potentially reducing service quality and availability for high-needs individuals.

## 9. If the decision is taken to proceed with this proposal, do you have any suggestions for how we can improve the experience of those affected? If so, please provide details.

The feedback expresses the following suggestions:

1. **Maintain Service Quality**: Concerns about ensuring high-quality care for vulnerable individuals, particularly those with dementia and learning disabilities, during any transition or outsourcing.
2. **Staff Continuity**: Importance of retaining existing staff or offering redeployment options to maintain service standards and continuity.
3. **Clear Communication**: Need for honest, timely, and transparent communication with service users, families, carers, and staff throughout the process.
4. **Consultation**: Calls for involvement of staff, service users, and their families in decision-making, including during the tendering process.
5. **Avoid Outsourcing Risks**: Fears that outsourcing to profit-driven providers could compromise care quality and staff conditions, leading to potential instability.
6. **Local Providers & Alternatives**: Suggestions to consider local service providers or charitable trusts, and to avoid "block booking" which can limit choices and create biased referral systems.

7. **Revenue Generation Ideas**: Proposals for increasing revenue through resource centre usage, such as renting out unused spaces, offering additional services, or charging for extras.
8. **Legal Protections**: Calls for legal and contractual safeguards to protect both service users and staff, particularly under TUPE regulations.
9. **Monitoring & Oversight**: Emphasis on continuous monitoring of service quality and satisfaction, with regular surveys and inspections.
10. **Transparency on Costs**: Request for clear information on how outsourcing may affect service costs for users and how savings will be achieved.

## 10. Do you have any suggestions on how we could deliver our Resource Centre services in a different way? If so, please provide details.

The feedback expresses the following suggestions:

1. **Merging Centres:** Many suggest merging Hungerford, Greenfield, and Phoenix Centres to increase capacity, reduce overheads, and better utilize space. This could include consolidating staff and possibly moving clients between centres to optimize service delivery.
2. **Improving Efficiency:** A focus on better staffing, such as having dedicated managers at each centre, and increasing occupancy through targeted referrals, would improve service delivery and reduce costs. Some propose increasing private placements or renting unused space.
3. **Transport and Budgets:** There’s support for promoting Personal Budgets to reduce reliance on tendered transport services, which would help manage transport costs.
4. **Community Collaboration:** Some suggest partnering with charities, expanding boundaries, or sharing resources with other services (e.g., meals, activities) to increase income and engagement.
5. **Preserving Services:** Many argue against privatization and stress the importance of maintaining a high standard of care, expressing concerns about staff morale and the quality of services if cost-cutting measures are too aggressive.

## 11. 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.

The proposals for optimising West Berkshire Council’s budget focus on revenue generation, cost efficiency, and meeting community needs.

1. **Revenue Generation**: Renting underutilised council facilities (e.g., theatres, libraries) for events can generate income. Selling unused properties like the Chestnut Care Home could raise funds but requires careful consideration of long-term impacts.

2. **Cost Control**: Implementing zero-based budgeting to identify inefficiencies, reducing managerial roles, and improving procurement by seeking multiple service quotations will ensure value for money. Energy-efficient measures, like solar panels, can reduce long-term costs.
3. **Social Care**: Partnering with external organisations to share resources and improving transport efficiency will reduce costs. Community-run care models (e.g., volunteer-run cafés) can generate revenue while supporting vulnerable groups.
4. **Governance**: Regular audits of staffing and expenses will ensure efficient resource use, and public engagement will ensure transparency and alignment with community needs.

These measures aim to balance fiscal responsibility with maintaining essential services.

## 12. Any further comments?

Feedback on the consultation about the future of resource centres in West Berkshire reveals key concerns:

1. **Consultation Process**: Many believe the decision to close or privatise services has already been made, with the consultation viewed as a formality. A lack of direct communication from leadership, like a personal visit, has caused frustration.
2. **Financial Concerns**: Despite a £69 billion government funding boost, including allocations for social care, respondents question why services are still being cut and urge the council to explore growth opportunities or innovative solutions.
3. **Impact on Vulnerable People**: There are strong concerns that closures or privatisation will harm vulnerable individuals, particularly those reliant on respite care, and create access issues in rural areas.
4. **Quality of Care**: Many fear privatisation will lower care standards due to cost-cutting measures.
5. **Staff Support**: Respondents praise staff and urge the council to invest in its workforce.

In summary, there is significant opposition to cuts and privatisation, with calls for transparency and alternative solutions.

## 13. Demographics of respondents

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 35.71% | 40 |
| Female | 53.57% | 60 |
| Other | 0.89% | 1 |
| Prefer not to say | 9.82% | 11 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Under 18 | 0.00% | 0 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 18-24 | 0.00% | 0 |
| 25-34 | 4.42% | 5 |
| 35-44 | 14.16% | 16 |
| 45-54 | 22.12% | 25 |
| 55-64 | 21.24% | 24 |
| 65-74 | 13.27% | 15 |
| 75 and over | 14.16% | 16 |
| Prefer not to say | 10.62% | 12 |

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

Maria Shepherd
Interim Service Director
Adult Social Care
6/1/2025

***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.*

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[i] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget
[ii] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations

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# West Berkshire Council

# Equity Impact Assessment

February 2025

Contents

## Section 1: Summary details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Directorate and Service Area** | People – Adult Social Care |
| **What is being assessed** (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | The proposal is to withdraw from the delivery of the three Resource Centres (Day Services) and explore options with the external market to deliver these services. |
| **Is this a new or existing function or policy?** | New |
| **Summary of assessment**<br>Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?<br>(following completion of the assessment). | The proposal is to withdraw from the delivery of day services delivered through the Resource Centres : The Phoenix Centre, Greenfields and Hungerford Resource Centre and look at how these services can be delivered though external providers.<br>The consultation raised concerns that this proposal may impact negatively on vulnerable service users, particularly those with learning disabilities, dementia or physical disabilities. Key concerns included unsettling for service users, financial and accessibility issues, staff and job concerns, loss of community support and quality of care.<br>There is likely to be uncertainty and disruption for the service users and staff, if a new provider were to operate the service, service users will be provided with an alternative service to meet their care needs. Staff could have the option of being transferred under Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) legislation. However, there is a risk of staff redundancies. Service users and staff will be kept informed of developments through regular communication and further consultation as necessary with staff and the Trade Union. |
| **Completed By** | Maria Shepherd |
| **Authorised By** | Paul Coe |

| Date of Assessment | 04/02/2025 |
|---|---|

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

| | |
|---|---|
| **Context / Background**<br><br>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | The Council runs three Resource Centres for adults with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, frailty and dementia. The centres are open five days a week, Monday to Friday. They offer a range of occupational, creative and therapeutic activities with dedicated staff.<br><br>**Greenfield House Resource Centre** is a service which we expect to be in high demand in the coming years. The property is owned by the Council and has a covenant which restricts use and access to business hours. The outturn occupancy in 2023-24 was 86% and the current occupancy is 110%.<br><br>**Hungerford Resource Centre** is a service which there is a reducing demand despite trying to promote the Centre. The property is owned by the Council and has a covenant which restricts use to business hours. The outturn occupancy in 2023-24 was 56.1% and the current occupancy is 66%.<br><br>**The Phoenix Resource Centre** is a service which we expect to be in high demand in the coming years. The property is owned by the Council and has a vacant parcel of land adjoining it. This building is the newest of the three centres. The outturn occupancy in 2023-24 was 83.7% and the current occupancy is 106%.<br><br>The resource centres are on budget. However, the cost of delivering these services is 60% more than the external market and given the Council's significant financial pressures we need to achieve the savings of £469K. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Proposals**<br><br>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action. | The proposal considered sourcing an external provider to run each of the Resource Centres, with a cost more aligned to that in the private sector. If an alternative provider is not found, we will look to provide services in a different way.<br><br>38.5% of respondents strongly disagreed, 12% disagreed, 20.9% neither agreed or disagreed, 10% strong agreed and 18.1% agreed with the proposal.<br><br>The feedback expressed concern over the potential outsourcing of services, emphasizing the negative impact on vulnerable service users, particularly those with learning disabilities, dementia or physical disabilities. It was highlighted by several existing Learning Disability Day Service Providers that they could support those clients with learning disabilities and that this was an opportunity for the Council to fully utilise the external market and continue to meet client needs.<br><br>The feedback expressed that the resource centres offer vulnerable adults with opportunities to socialise with others, learn new skills, maintain their independence and reduce/delay the need for ongoing care and support. The Council would work with providers to ensure that current care needs were met and that appropriate measures were put in place to manage any future contracts with external providers<br><br>The feedback expressed concerns over the future delivery of transport for clients if these services are not delivered by the Council due the necessity to change the type of licence the Council holds. The transport for clients would need to be reviewed in conjunction with any change in provider and there would be opportunity to ensure any future transport arrangements are delivered efficiently across the district. There is a risk of further staff redundancies and/or re-deployment options to support the Council in delivering transport for SEND. |
| **Evidence / Intelligence**<br><br>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you | Under the Care Act 2014 there is no statutory requirement for the Local Authority to operate Resource Centres. Identified eligible needs can be met through services commissioned through external providers.<br><br>Several Learning Disability Day Service Providers see this as a real opportunity to work with the Council and feel that rather than going through a lengthy tendering process the existing providers could absorb those clients with Learning Disabilities and that we should utilise the specialists that already operate in the district. |

| | |
|---|---|
| make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments. | Many comments from the consultation suggested merging the centres to increase capacity, reduce overheads and improve the utilisation of the buildings. This could encourage community collaboration by partnering up with others to share resources. |
| **Alternatives considered / rejected**<br><br>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option. | Alternative options reported by the consultation responses to increase capacity, reduce overheads and make better use of the space were to merge the centres.<br><br>Other suggestions around alternative use of the buildings and partnering with charities could improve utilisation of the buildings and save money. |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

| Protected Characteristic | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of Impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | The age range of the service users within the resource centres vary from 25-80 years.<br>Individuals of all ages may experience uncertainty and anxiety with potential changes to the current service they receive.<br>Individuals of all ages will have to move to a different provider to meet their needs which may impact of their health and wellbeing.<br>The age range of staff vary across the Resource Centres | The age of individuals will be an important factor that informs the choice of new services. We will work with providers to ensure the care needs of individuals are met.<br>Robust person-centred assessments will involve carers/families and transitional plans will be developed. Individuals will be supported to move by people they know well – staff and families. Advocates will be involved where appropriate<br>We will keep Service users, their families and staff up to date with regular communication and further consultation with staff as necessary.<br>Ensure appropriate engagement and | Maria Shepherd, Interim Service Director, Adult Social Care | Tbc |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | The Council will seek to offer re-deployment wherever possible. This may create opportunities for staff of all ages to develop new skills and to take on new roles and responsibilities.<br><br>There are high numbers of alternative jobs available in the Health and Social Care sector for staff of all ages.<br><br>Older staff may find it harder to gain new employment.<br><br>Experienced staff of all ages may find it difficult to obtain comparable terms and conditions in the independent sector.<br><br>Older staff may find their pension is adversely impacted by re-deployment/transferring to a different employer<br>. | consultation with staff with HR and Trades Union support.<br><br>Support staff to explore alternative roles within the council.<br><br>Assist with training and skills such as CV writing, job applications and interviews | | |
| **Disability** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | Some of the Service Users have a learning disability, | We will work with existing providers to ensure the care needs of individuals are met. | Maria Shepherd, Interim Service | tbc |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | some also have physical or sensory disabilities.<br><br>Individuals with disabilities and their families may experience uncertainty and anxiety with potential changes to the current service they receive.<br><br>People with some disabilities may struggle to adjust to their new environment.<br><br>Potential to improve outcomes for people through an alternative service. Some disability related needs may be better met in a different environment<br><br>Changes to work location may mean that staff with disabilities find it more difficult to carry out their duties e.g. they may have to travel further.<br><br>Alternative employment opportunities may be affected. Some people may not want to disclose they have a disability. | Commissioning, social workers/ the service will work with carers/families supporting both parties through the transition phase and meet with them on an individual basis, if they have any concerns. Staff from the current/new service will help with the transition.<br><br>We will keep Service users, their families and staff up to date with regular communication and further consultation with staff as necessary.<br><br>Ensure individuals can state what support they need.<br><br>Offer confidential one to one support sessions so that all staff can be assisted on an individual basis.<br><br>Assist with training and skills such as CV writing, job applications and interviews. | Director Adult Social Care | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Alternative employers may not be able to accommodate reasonable adjustments. | Assist people to apply for 'Access to Work' for new employment. | | |
| **Gender Reassignment** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | N/A | N/A | | |
| **Marriage & Civil Partnership** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | N/A | N/A | | |
| **Pregnancy & Maternity** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | Staff on maternity leave have priority status in the redeployment process.<br><br>The impact of the process may cause stress and anxiety during pregnancy.<br><br>Staff on maternity/paternity leave may feel isolated or uninformed about the process | Make reasonable adjustments to enable staff to participate to the extent they wish.<br><br>Arrange 'Keeping in Touch' days where appropriate.<br><br>Ensure staff are aware of their statutory rights with regards to maternity pay. | Maria Shepherd, Interim Service Director,Adult Social Care | |
| **Race** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | People with English as a second language may find it more difficult to form relationships with staff and other people in a new setting. | We will with individuals and their carers/families to carry out assessments and ensure that their needs and wishes and what is important to them are understood to | Maria Shepherd, Interim Service Director, Adult Social Care | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Where English is not a first language, or where staff have a lower level of language and literacy skills, future employment may be restricted. | enable suitable alternative provision to be identified.<br><br>Offer confidential one to one support sessions so that all staff can be assisted on an individual basis.<br><br>Assist with training and skills such as CV writing, job applications and interviews | | |
| **Sex** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | Most of the workforce is female, some of whom work part time. The loss of flexible working could affect the whole family (also see 'carer' characteristic below). | Try to redeploy staff wherever possible.<br><br>Help staff investigate flexibility of other employers and assist with applying for other roles if required.<br><br>Assist with training and skills such as CV writing, job applications and interviews. | | |
| **Sexual Orientation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | N/A | N/A | | |
| **Religion or Belief** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | Potential impact on routines and practices with a new employer - work pattern, holidays/days of worship, | Be sensitive in the offer of redeployment around any adjustments in place.<br><br>Offer confidential one to one support sessions so that all | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | food, wearing a faith symbol and dress. | staff can be assisted on an individual basis.<br><br>Assist with training and skills such as CV writing, job applications and interviews. | | |

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## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Areas of deprivation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Displaced communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Care experienced people** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | The service users all have assessed care needs under the Care Act 2014<br><br>There may be members of the workforce that have caring responsibilities which may restrict alternative employment opportunities due to availability and locations.<br><br>There may be fewer redeployment opportunities if staff are restricted to where they | We will ensure that all care needs continue to be met under the Care Act 2014.<br><br>Ensure appropriate engagement and consultation with staff, HR and Trades Unions. Ensure all roles within the redeployment pool are explored by staff members even if the role is significantly different from their existing role because they may have transferrable skills. | Maria Shepherd, Interim Service Director, Adult Social Care | |

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| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | work because of caring responsibilities | Assist with training and skills such as CV writing, job applications and interviews | | |
| **The Armed Forces Community** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 4: Review

**Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Review Date** | **01/12/25** |
| **Person Responsible for Review** | **Maria Shepherd** |
| **Authorised By** | **Paul Coe** |

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Explore options to deliver Adult Social Care (ASC) Resource Centre services through an alternative provider or in a different way | Service Director: Maria Shepherd<br>Author: Maria Shepherd | Xx xxx 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| **Proposal:** | To source an external provider to run each of the Resource Centres, with a cost of provision more aligned to that in the private sector. This could include agreement to rent the buildings. If an alternative provider is not found, we will look to provide the services in a different way. |

| Total budget 2024/25: | £2,037,650 | Initial proposed saving 2025/26: | £469,000 | Recommended saving 2025/26: | tbc |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**No. of responses:**

In total, 175 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows:

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 121 | 69.1% |
| A user of the service | 27 | 15.4% |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 1 | 0.5% |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 5 | 2.86% |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 7 | 4% |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 47 | 26.8% |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 4 | 2.29% |
| A District Councillor | 1 | 0.57% |
| A partner organisation | 1 | 0.57% |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 5 | 2.86% |
| Other - please specify below: | 11 | 6.29% |

**Key issues raised:**

- Overall respondents are against the proposal - 38.5% strongly disagreed and 12% disagreed that we should explore options to deliver resource centres through an alternative provider or in a different way. 20.9% neither agreed nor disagreed. 10% strongly agreed and 18.1% agreed that we should explore options to deliver resource centres through an alternative provider or in a different way.

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

**Overview of Responses and Recommendations**

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Budget Proposals 2025/26: Explore options to deliver Adult Social Care (ASC) Resource Centre services through an alternative provider or in a different way</th><th>Service Director: Maria Shepherd<br>Author: Maria Shepherd</th><th>Xx xxx 2025<br>(Corporate Board)</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3">
<ul>
<li>The feedback expresses significant concern over the potential outsourcing of services, emphasizing the negative impact on vulnerable service users, particularly those with learning disabilities, dementia, or physical disabilities. Key concerns include unsettling for service users, financial and accessibility issues, staff and job concerns, loss of community support and quality of care.</li>
<li>The Resource Centres offer vulnerable adults with disabilities and health needs with opportunities to socialise with others, learn news skills, maintain their independence and reduce/delay the need for ongoing care and support. These Centres also provide respite for some carers, who are vital to the care sector.</li>
<li>Many comments from relatives of service users commented positively on the quality of care from the staff and their positive attitudes and were concerned that if this service was taken over by a private provider the care would not be of the same standard and the provider would only be interested in making a profit.</li>
<li>Transport to/from the resource centres is provided by the in-house Transport Services Team. If the centres are externally managed, the transport could no longer continue in-house because of the licensing issue. The transport team has advised that this would need to be tendered externally and potentially could cost more. We currently use 10 minibuses (8 of which are leased) daily, with 13 drivers. The budget for the drivers is £483K, the budget for the vehicles is £189K. The transport team believe that if this was tendered on the external market the estimated cost would be £843K and there is a real risk that the local external market could not manage this additional demand, there would be a loss of income to the service, associated costs of terminating leases early and potential redundancy costs. However, it is my opinion that this service is not fully utilised and there may be some efficiencies to achieve.</li>
<li>Most users (47.7%) travel less than 5 miles to attend a Resource Centre. 41.5% of users travel between 5 – 15 miles to attend a Resource Centre</li>
</ul>
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Equality issues:</td><td colspan="3">No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren’t already included in the Equity Impact Assessment.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Suggestions for minimising any negative effects of</td><td>Suggestion</td><td colspan="2">Council response</td></tr>
<tr><td>Clear communication – need for honest, timely and transparent communication with service user,</td><td colspan="2">The Council is taking a considered decision and the impact on service users, families and staff is a key consideration.</td></tr>
</table>

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Explore options to deliver Adult Social Care (ASC) Resource Centre services through an alternative provider or in a different way | | Service Director: Maria Shepherd<br>Author: Maria Shepherd | Xx xxx 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **the proposed change:** | families, carers and staff throughout the process. | The Council will keep service users, families, carers and staff up to date with the outcome of the consultation in line with the key dates outlined in consultation document. | |
| | Maintain service quality and staff continuity including contractual safeguards to protect both service users and staff. | The Council would put in place appropriate contract management processes to manage any future contracts with external providers.<br>The Council would comply with all relevant legislation and ensure staff are transferred in accordance with TUPE or offered alternative roles in the Council. | |
| | Calls for involvement of staff, service users and their families in decision making, including during the tendering process. | The Council ran a successful retendering process for the Care Homes which involved consultation with service users, families and staff throughout, we would follow this format to ensure everyone is consulted as required. | |
| | Avoid outsourcing as this could compromise quality and staff conditions. | The Council is taking a considered decision. | |
| | Consider working with local service providers or charitable trusts and avoid block booking which can limit and create biased referral systems. | The Council is taking a considered decision. | |
| **Suggestions for other savings options:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** | |
| | Improve efficiency - All the buildings are underutilised, consider how the Council could use this space better eg. Increase capacity, share the space with Council Staff, multi-purpose sites offering respite and or supported living utilising the neighbouring plot of land. | The Council's Transformation Programme includes an accommodation review and this will consider how the Council can optimise use of all its property assets. | |



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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Explore options to deliver Adult Social Care (ASC) Resource Centre services through an alternative provider or in a different way | | Service Director: Maria Shepherd<br>Author: Maria Shepherd | Xx xxx 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Merging Centres to increase capacity, reduce overheads and better utilise space. This could include consolidating staff and possibly moving service users between centres to optimise service delivery. | The Council would need to consider whether savings and efficiencies could be achieved and whether the cost would be in line with the external market. | |
| | Make use of existing providers already operating in the Local Area and move away from pan-disability centres, offering specialist services to meet client needs. | During the consultation period several of the existing LD day service providers requested a meeting to advise that they see this as real opportunity for existing providers based in our District to work with the Council, they felt that rather than going through a lengthy tendering process the sector could absorb the LD clients currently attending WBC Resource Centres. However, the biggest issue would be whether they would be able to support TUPE of staff.<br>The Council was approached before the consultation by another provider who is looking at developing a dementia hub in the district, bringing dementia services for families under one roof including day breaks, activities, support groups, dementia training, personal care, café, community outreach. A similar hub is in operation in West Sussex. | |
| | Community Collaboration – partner with charities, expand boundaries, share resources with other services. | During the consultation period several of the existing LD day service providers advised us that they felt they could absorb the LD Clients currently attending the Resource Centres.<br>The Council was approached before the consultation by a provider looking to develop a dementia hub in the district. | |
| | Transport and budgets – promote personal budgets for reduce reliance on tendered transport services which could have manage transport costs. | The Council would need to consider whether this would be more efficient than delivering an in-house service. | |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| **Budget Proposals 2025/26: Explore options to deliver Adult Social Care (ASC) Resource Centre services through an alternative provider or in a different way** | **Service Director: Maria Shepherd**<br>**Author: Maria Shepherd** | **Xx xxx 2025**<br>**(Corporate Board)** |
|---|---|---|
| **Suggestions for income generation:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** |
| | Revenue generation – renting underutilised Council facilities (eg theatre, libraries for events to generate income. | The Council is already reviewing how it can generate income from buildings eg. Shaw House. |
| | Selling unused properties like the Chestnut Care Home could raise funds but requires careful consideration of long-term impacts. | The Council is already reviewing its assets. |
| | Implementing zero-based budgeting to identify inefficiencies, reducing managerial roles and improving procurement by seeking multiple service quotations will ensure value for money. Energy efficient measures like solar panels can reduce long term costs. | The Council would need to consider changing to zero based budgeting. The Council continuing looks at identifying inefficiencies and has been required to make significant on-going savings to improve the Council's financial position.<br>Solar Panels are being considered for all Council buildings. |
| | Partner with external organisations to share resources and improve transport efficiency will reduce costs. | The Council would need to consider how this could be done. |
| | Regular Audits of staffing and expenses will ensure efficient use of resources and public engagement will ensure transparency and alignments with community needs. | The Council has processes in place. |
| **Officer conclusion and recommendation** | We all want to live in the place we call home, with the people and things we love, in communities where we look out for one another doing the things that matter to us. We might need some support with this if we have a disability or health condition and Adult Social Care must provide or arrange services that prevent people developing needs for care and support or reduce/delay the need for ongoing care and support. | |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Explore options to deliver Adult Social Care (ASC) Resource Centre services through an alternative provider or in a different way | | Service Director: Maria Shepherd<br>Author: Maria Shepherd | Xx xxx 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **as a result of the responses:** | The Resource Centres offer vulnerable adults with disabilities and health needs with opportunities to socialise with others, learn new skills, maintain their independence and reduce/delay the need for ongoing care and support. These Centres also provide respite for some carers, who are vital to the care sector.<br><br>The responses received were very detailed and complex, in summary respondents were against an external provider coming into deliver these services. The feedback expresses significant concern over the potential outsourcing of services, emphasizing the negative impact on vulnerable service users, particularly those with learning disabilities, dementia, or physical disabilities. Key concerns included unsettling for service users, financial and accessibility issues, staff and job concerns, loss of community support and quality of care.<br><br>Several of our existing Learning Disability Day Service Providers see this as a real opportunity to work with us and feel that rather than going through a lengthy tendering process the existing providers could absorb those clients with Learning Disabilities and that we should utilise the specialists that already operate in the district moving away from pan-disability sites.<br><br>Many suggest merging the centres to increase capacity, reduce overheads and better utilize space. This could include consolidating staff and possibly moving clients between centres to optimize service delivery. This could also encourage community collaboration by partnering up with others to share resources and assist with retaining an in-house transport service, avoiding the potential increase in costs in tendering this service externally.<br><br>Recommendation:<br><br>1. Withdraw from the delivery of day services delivered through the Resource Centres: The Phoenix Centre, Greenfields and Hungerford Resource Centre and look at how these services can be delivered though external providers. | | |



**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Increase some Adult Social Care (ASC) fees and charges above the rate of inflation**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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**Why we consulted?**

Councils across the country continue to face unprecedented financial pressures, West Berkshire Council is no exception. Post the COVID pandemic, Councils including West Berkshire have experienced a high inflation environment, resulting in increasing costs and rising demand on our social services supporting our most vulnerable residents.

In 2025/26, we need to find £12.1 million in savings or income generation. This figure assumes that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £10.4 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.2 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified nine proposals.

For more information, please visit [https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget)

**Approach**

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on Monday, 11 November 2024 with feedback requested by midnight on Monday, 23 December 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index page[i], which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hub[ii].

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 considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

Everyone that currently pays ones of the fees that is part of this proposal was written to regarding the consultation and the Learning Disability Partnership Board also provided support to individuals with a Learning Disability.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 11 November 2024, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and made them available to Services to put up as required.

## Proposal Background

West Berkshire Council is currently reviewing the cost of its Adult Social Care Services to ensure we can deliver value for money and meet the needs of our residents.

Each year the Council increases its fees and charges in line with inflation but this year we are proposing to increase some Adult Social Care fees and charges above the normal annual inflationary rate to bring them more in line with what it costs to deliver the service. These fees and charges are:

- Transport costs per trip
- Deferred Payment set up fee
- Annual Deferred Payment fee
- Full Cost Administration fee

## Transport Costs

Last year Adult Social Care changed how it charged for transport by introducing a flat rate charge per trip, the original proposed fee was £5.00 per trip but to limit the impact this was reduced to £3.75 per trip. Some trips cost more than £100.00 per trip depending on the distance and mode of transport.

There are currently 196 individuals who pay for transport services.

## Deferred Payment set-up fee and annual fee

A Deferred Payment Agreement is an agreement between an individual and the Council that is designed to help an individual who has been assessed as having to pay the full cost of their care, in a care home or supported living, but cannot access their money because their capital is tied up in their home.

The current costs are:

Set-up fee - £886.00
Annual fee - £310.00

There are currently 31 individuals with a Deferred Payment Agreement, and on average 21 new Deferred Payments are set up annually.

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Increase some Adult Social Care (ASC) fees and charges above the rate of inflation**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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**Full Cost Administration fee**

The Full Cost Administration fee is charged to individuals who live in the community whose capital is above the upper capital threshold of £23,250 who ask the Council to arrange their care and support rather than arranging it themselves. The current annual fee is £286.00.

Currently 265 individuals pay the Full Cost Administration fee.

**Legislative and Statutory Requirements**

The Care Act 2014 governs what services the Council should provide as part of an individual's care package, what services the Council does not need to provide and how the Council can charge for these services.

**Proposal Details**

To increase the following fees and charges above the normal annual inflationary rate (October 2024 CPI +2% in 2025/26):

| Fee | Current charge | Proposed charge | Proposed % increase |
|---|---|---|---|
| Transport per trip | £3.75 per trip | £5 | 33% |
| Deferred Payment set up fee | £886 | £1,200 | 35% |
| Deferred Payment annual fee | £310 | £400 | 29% |
| Full Cost Administration fee | £286 | £365 | 28% |

These proposals will save the Council approximately £100,000 per year.

**Consultation Response**

<u>Number of Responses</u>

In total, 56 responses were received.

We also received no petitions.

<u>Summary of Main Points</u>

The main points were in relation to everything getting more expensive and this proposal would mainly affect vulnerable individuals.

Some individuals agreed that the services shouldn't be subsidised.

<u>Summary of Responses by Question</u>

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Increase some Adult Social Care (ASC) fees and charges above the rate of inflation**

**Consultation Summary Report**

---

**1. Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 48 | 85.71 |
| A user of the service | 12 | 21.43 |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 1 | 1.79 |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 2 | 3.57 |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 2 | 3.57 |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 4 | 7.14 |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 1 | 1.79 |
| A District Councillor | 1 | 1.79 |
| A partner organisation | 0 | 0 |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 0 | 0 |
| Other - please specify below: | 0 | 0 |

**2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to increase the following fees and charges above the normal annual inflationary rate (October 2024 CPI +2% in 2025/26)?**

| | Percent | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Strongly agree** | **Agree** | **Neither agree nor disagree** | **Disagree** | **Strongly disagree** |
| Transport per trip (From £3.75 to £5) | 40% | 20% | 8% | 12% | 20% |
| Deferred payment set up fee (From £886 to £1,200) | 20% | 31.11% | 11.11% | 6.67% | 31.11% |
| Deferred payment annual fee (From £310 to £400) | 30.43% | 30.43% | 8.70% | 6.52% | 23.91% |
| Full cost administration fee (From £286 to £365) | 32.61% | 28.26% | 4.35% | 10.87% | 23.91% |

Most comments made by respondents were in relation to the increase in the transports costs.

The responses varied from agreeing that the fees should be increased and not subsidised to they shouldn't be increased as they will affect vulnerable individuals.

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

The main responses were that some individuals would not be able to afford the increase in the transport costs and this could affect their mental wellbeing.

**4. If you think our proposed change might have a negative effect on you or other people, do you have any suggestions for how we could minimise it, should we proceed? If so, please provide details.**

Some of the responses related to not spending money on Newbury AFC and other projects like the Peace Garden or that savings should be made from selling off assets.

**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.**

Proposals included contracting out the transport services or reviewing the costs of the existing services.

**6. Any further comments?**

The responses were mainly about not targeting the vulnerable and that some of the charges already seemed high.

**7. Demographics of respondents**

| | |
|---|---|
| Male | 47.73% |
| Female | 45.45% |
| Other | 0.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 6.82% |

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

Your name - Jo England
Job title - Joint Interim Service Director
Service unit – ASC & Public Health
Date – 3 January 2025

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Increase some Adult Social Care (ASC) fees and charges above the rate of inflation**

**Consultation Summary Report**

***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.*

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[i] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget
[ii] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations

# West Berkshire Council

# Equity Impact Assessment

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Contents

## Section 1: Summary details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Directorate and Service Area** | Adult Social Care & Public Health |
| **What is being assessed** (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | To increase the following Adult Social Care fees above the normal rate of inflation increase to bring them more in line with what it cost to provide the service.<br>• Transport fees – to increase the charge from £3.75 per trip to £5.00 per trip as per the original proposal last year<br>• Deferred Payment set up fee – to increase this from £886 to £1200<br>• Deferred Payment annual fee – to increase this from £310 to £400 per annum<br>• Full cost client administration fee – to increase this from £286 to £365 per annum. |
| **Is this a new or existing function or policy?** | existing |
| **Summary of assessment**<br>Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?<br>(following completion of the assessment). | To increase the following Adult Social Care fees above the normal rate of inflation increase to bring them more in line with what it cost to provide the service.<br>• Transport fees – to increase the charge from £3.75 per trip to £5.00 per trip as per the original proposal last year<br>• Deferred Payment set up fee – to increase this from £886 to £1200<br>• Deferred Payment annual fee – to increase this from £310 to £400 per annum<br>• Full cost client administration fee – to increase this from £286 to £365 per annum.<br>Individuals will be required to pay more. |
| **Completed By** | Jo England |

| Authorised By | Paul Coe |
| --- | --- |
| Date of Assessment | 18.10.24 |

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

| | |
| --- | --- |
| **Context / Background**<br><br>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | The Care Act 2014 governs what services the Council should provide as part of an individual's care package, what services the Council does not need to provide and how the Council can charge for these services.<br><br>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance<br><br>To increase the following Adult Social Care fees above the normal rate of inflation increase to bring them more in line with what it costs to provide the service. |
| **Proposals**<br><br>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action. | To increase the following Adult Social Care fees above the normal rate of inflation increase to bring them more in line with what it costs to provide the service.<br>• Transport fees – to increase the charge from £3.75 per trip to £5.00 per trip as per the original proposal last year<br>• Deferred Payment set up fee – to increase this from £886 to £1200<br>• Deferred Payment annual fee – to increase this from £310 to £400 per annum<br>• Full cost client administration fee – to increase this from £286 to £365 per annum. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Evidence / Intelligence**<br><br>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments. | The original proposal for the transport costs that were introduced last year was to charge £5 per trip but this was reduced to £3.75 per trip when it was implemented last year. The new proposed cost is still far less than the at actual cost of providing the service.<br><br>The other 3 cost increases relate to clients who have capital over the upper capital threshold of £23250 and the proposed increases are to make these fees cost neutral. |
| **Alternatives considered / rejected**<br><br>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option. | The alternative is to do nothing or to only increase in line with inflation.<br><br>This would mean that we are still heavily subsidising these services. |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

| Protected Characteristic | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of Impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | Part of this proposal could affect any client over the age over of 18 who receives a transport service from Adult Social Care service as they may be required to pay more for the service that they currently receive.<br><br>The other elements will affect mainly old clients who own properties or who have assets above the upper capital threshold of £23,250. | | Jo England | April 2025 |

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| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Disability** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | Part of this proposal could affect any client who receives a transport service from Adult Social Care as they may be required to pay more for the service that they currently receive.<br>The other elements will affect mainly old clients who own properties or who have assets above the upper capital threshold of £23,250 | | Jo England | April 2025 |
| **Gender Reassignment** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Marriage & Civil Partnership** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Pregnancy & Maternity** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Race** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Sex** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Sexual Orientation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Religion or Belief** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

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## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Areas of deprivation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Displaced communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Care experienced people** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | Part of this proposal could affect any client who receives a transport service from Adult Social Care as they may be required to pay more for the service that they currently receive.<br>The other elements will affect mainly old clients who own properties or who have assets above the upper capital threshold of £23,250 | | Jo England | April 2025 |
| **The Armed Forces Community** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 4: Review

**Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Review Date** | **1 December 2025** |
| **Person Responsible for Review** | **Jo England** |
| **Authorised By** | **Paul Coe** |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Budget Proposals 2025/26: Increase some Adult Social Care (ASC) fees and charges above the rate of inflation** | | | **Service Director: Paul Coe**<br>**Author: Jo England** | | **14 Jan 2025**<br>**(Corporate Board)** |
| **Proposal:** | To increase the following fees and charges above the normal annual inflationary rate (October 2024 CPI +2% in 2025/26) | | | | |
| **Total budget 2024/25:** | | **Initial proposed saving 2025/26:** | £100,000 | **Recommended saving 2025/26:** | |
| **No. of responses:** | In total, 56 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows: | | | | |

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 48 | 85.71% |
| A user of the service | 12 | 21.43% |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 1 | 1.79% |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 2 | 3.57% |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 2 | 3.57% |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 4 | 7.14% |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 1 | 1.79% |
| A District Councillor | 1 | 1.79% |
| A partner organisation | 0 | 0.00% |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 0 | 0.00% |
| Other - please specify below: | 0 | 0.00% |

We also received 0 petitions:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Key issues raised:** | Transport costs – 60% of respondents either strongly agree or agree with increasing the fees while only 32% strongly disagree or disagree. |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Increase some Adult Social Care (ASC) fees and charges above the rate of inflation | Service Director: Paul Coe<br>Author: Jo England | 14 Jan 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| | Number of respondents per each proposal:<br>• Transport – 50<br>• DP set up – 45<br>• DP annual – 46<br>• Admin fee – 46<br><br>Deferred Payment Set up fee – 51.11% of respondents either strongly agree or agree with increasing the fees while only 37.78% strongly disagree or disagree.<br><br>Deferred Payment annual fee – 60.86% of respondents either strongly agree or agree with increasing the fees while only 30.43% strongly disagree or disagree.<br><br>Full cost administration fee – 60.87% of respondents either strongly agree or agree with increasing the fees while only 34.78% strongly disagree or disagree.<br><br>Most of the comments made by respondents were in relation to the increase in the transport costs.<br><br>*I feel the transport costs of £5 per trip are reasonable. Most people who need transport to get to a day service may be getting the mobility part of disability living allowance or personal independence payments, maximum of 75.75 per week to be used for transport/mobility. If a person went to a service 5 days a week that would be £50 per week. If they are on the lower mobility rate of disability living allowance they would get less each week but maybe if their mobility has changed maybe should be getting the higher rate of personal independence payments. The general population has to pay their transport costs for a journey to and from somewhere for they want to attend.*<br><br>*Everything has got more expensive and these charges are not exempt*<br><br>*You can't expect vulnerable people to pay more than they already are.*<br><br>*In favour of increasing the fees but concerned that not all users will be able to pay the extra*<br><br>*These costs have to be covered, and subsidising it risks the council running out of money altogether. These fees are not extortionate. If residents find £5 too expensive for transport, there are other methods but they will be more expensive.* |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

**Overview of Responses and Recommendations**

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Increase some Adult Social Care (ASC) fees and charges above the rate of inflation | | Service Director: Paul Coe<br>Author: Jo England | 14 Jan 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *I do not understand what a deferred payment is so I have selected neutral, though would support any cost reduction.* | | |
| **Equality issues:** | No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the Equity Impact Assessment. | | |
| **Suggestions for minimising any negative effects of the proposed change:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** | |
| | Withdraw and DO NOT spend £400,000 propping up Newbury AFC to return to Faraday Road. | This money has already been committed | |
| | You shouldn't be looking to make more money out of vulnerable people using Adult Social Care. You should look at other departments of the Council to save money. | All departments across the Council are being asked to find savings | |
| | I understand that transport has to balance their budget, but £5 a journal is much more than a return trip on public transport. Whilst I appreciate that public transport is not a door to door service, a return trip will be £10 on your transport. Maybe increasing the costs up to £5 over a period of time is the answer. | This increasing in the phasing in of the proposed cost from last year when a decision was made by Members to implement a lower charge to reduce the impact of the change in the way transport was charged for. | |
| | | | |
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**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Increase some Adult Social Care (ASC) fees and charges above the rate of inflation | | Service Director: Paul Coe<br>Author: Jo England | 14 Jan 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| **Suggestions for other savings options:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** | |
| | Stop wasting money! Eg £800,000 on a peace gardens is ridiculous in current climate<br><br>Cutting down trees on Stroud green, then replacing them with the same species which have a short lifespan is another waste of money - should of capped them , would have been cheaper in the long run.<br><br>No doubt there are many other wastes of large amounts of money within council spending! | This project is backed by external grants of £375,000 from the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and £420,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund<br><br>The trees at Stroud Green needed to be removed due to safety concerns over the health of the trees and following public consultation a decision was made to replace them with the same species.<br><br>The Council as a whole is looking for efficiencies and savings. | |
| | Use email to correspond, reduce amount of physical paper sent out (e.g. I receive housing benefit remittance notification regularly - at least have an option for receivers/users to select email over post. | There is a move to correspond more via email where possible as stated but not all of the residents in West Berkshire are able to communicate in this way. | |
| | sell off other assets if we have any, press government for increased grants/resources | This is already being done. | |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Increase some Adult Social Care (ASC) fees and charges above the rate of inflation | | | Service Director: Paul Coe<br>Author: Jo England | 14 Jan 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Suggestions for income generation:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** | | |
| | | | | |
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| | | | | |
| **Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:** | The majority of the respondents agreed with increasing the fees above the rate of inflation and it is the recommendation of Adult Social Care to proceed with this proposal. | | | |



**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

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**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Create a voluntary charitable contribution (via Council Tax payments) scheme**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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## Why we consulted?

Councils across the country continue to face unprecedented financial pressures, West Berkshire Council is no exception. Post the COVID pandemic, Councils including West Berkshire have experienced a high inflation environment, resulting in increasing costs and rising demand on our social services supporting our most vulnerable residents.

In 2025/26, we need to find £12.1 million in savings or income generation. This figure assumes that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £10.4 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.2 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified nine proposals.

For more information, please visit [https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget)

## Approach

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on Monday, 11 November 2024 with feedback requested by midnight on Monday, 23 December 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index page[i], which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hub[ii].

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 considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions.

Finally, we issued a press release on 11 November 2024, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and made them available to Services to put up as required.

## Proposal Background

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Create a voluntary charitable contribution (via Council Tax payments) scheme**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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West Berkshire Council (WBC) is required to collect council tax from the households within the district. The revenue collected is used alongside grants and business rates revenue to fund both statutory and discretionary services.

Current arrangements for council tax charging and collection can be found on the WBC website here https://www.westberks.gov.uk/counciltax or by contacting our Customer Services team on 01635 551111.

Statutory services are services which the council must fund, e.g. education, elections, licensing, waste collection and disposal.

Discretionary services are services that individual councils choose to fund based on local decisions and need, e.g., economic development, maintain parks and open spaces.

In light of the Council's financial position and well-documented funding challenges across local government; there is a need to identify new ways of generating additional income in support of local services, in particular those which are discretionary.

**Legislative and Statutory Requirements**

Council tax is a compulsory charge levied on all residential properties within the district and contributes to the cost of local services.

**Proposal Details**

To create a voluntary scheme which would allow residents to make an additional charitable contribution on top of their council tax payments.

Although it is not possible to calculate the likely revenue generation in West Berkshire, we believe this scheme has the potential to have a positive impact on the whole district, as any monies raised will be used to enhance discretionary services identified by the charitable trust established in support.

**Consultation Response**

Number of Responses

In total, 89 responses were received.

Summary of Main Points

Very few points were raised about the principle of the scheme. As the scheme is voluntary, most respondents were not concerned about the impact it would have on them personally.

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Create a voluntary charitable contribution (via Council Tax payments) scheme**

**Consultation Summary Report**

There was a strong feeling among respondents that all residents should be invited to contribute, not just those in Band G and H properties.

A number of respondents provided ideas for spending monies raised through the scheme. These are detailed below.

Summary of Responses by Question

**1. Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 83 | 93.26 |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 0 | 0 |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 6 | 6.74 |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 4 | 4.49 |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 8 | 8.99 |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 5 | 5.62 |
| A District Councillor | 2 | 2.25 |
| A partner organisation | 1 | 1.12 |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 0 | 0 |
| Other - please specify below: | 2 | 2.25 |

Parish council representatives

**2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to create a voluntary scheme that would allow residents to make an additional charitable contribution on top of their Council Tax payments?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 23 | 27.06 |
| Agree | 24 | 28.24 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 12 | 14.12 |
| Disagree | 10 | 11.76 |
| Strongly Disagree | 16 | 18.82 |
| **Total** | **85** | **100%** |

Agreement that there is little harm in the trial as it will be optional and is income generating. Strong feelings that it should be open to all residents.

**3. Do you pay Council Tax to West Berkshire Council?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 82 | 97.62 |
| No | 2 | 2.38 |
| **Total** | **84** | **100%** |

### 4. What is your Council Tax property band?

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A | 1 | 1.27 |
| B | 0 | 0 |
| C | 18 | 22.78 |
| D | 21 | 26.58 |
| E | 12 | 15.19 |
| F | 9 | 11.39 |
| G | 9 | 11.39 |
| H | 3 | 3.8 |
| Don’t know | 6 | 7.59 |
| **Total** | 79 | **100%** |

### 5. If the decision it taken to proceed with this proposal, would you consider making a regular additional charitable contribution on top of your Council Tax payments?

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 19 | 24.05 |
| No | 44 | 55.7 |
| Maybe | 16 | 20.25 |
| **Total** | **79** | **100%** |

### 6. What discretionary services do you think the voluntary contributions collected should help fund?

54 responses received to this question. A number were suggested, including:

- Digital inclusion schemes
- Support hubs
- Sports facilities
- Youth services
- Social care

- Footpath maintenance
- Homelessness support
- Public events
- Grounds maintenance

**7. 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.**

25 responses received to this question. A number were suggested, including:

- Soliciting donations for smaller projects through just given
- Installing a paid Clean Air Zone
- Reviewing all contracts to find efficiencies
- Partnering with local businesses to match fund contributions
- Setting up a West Berkshire Lottery
- Undertake a wide ranging management restructure
- Local government reorganisation

**8. Any further comments?**

15 responses received to this question. Strong view that the scheme should be open to all and that marketing of the scheme will be key to its success.

Ensure Gift Aid registration.

**9. Demographics of respondents**

Of respondents, 35.21% were male and 46.48% were female, with 18.31% declining to answer.

The best represented age group was 55-64, with 19.72% of respondents. Only one individual under 25 answered.

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

Gabrielle Mancini
Service Director- Transformation
Transformation
7/1/25

***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.*

[i] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget
[ii] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations

# West Berkshire Council

# Equity Impact Assessment

March 2023

Contents

## Section 1: Summary details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Directorate and Service Area** | Resources- Transformation |
| **What is being assessed** (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | Establishment of a voluntary council tax contribution scheme |
| **Is this a new or existing function or policy?** | New |
| **Summary of assessment**<br><br>Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?<br><br>(following completion of the assessment). | Council tax is a compulsory charge levied on all residential properties within the district and contributes to the cost of local services. The proposed scheme would introduce a separate, voluntary option to enable residents to make an additional financial contribution alongside their council tax.<br><br>A charitable trust will be established and will collect all voluntary contributions. These contributions will be ringfenced and will only be used to finance the discretionary services which are identified for support by the charitable trust.<br><br>Although it is not possible to calculate the likely revenue generation in West Berkshire, we believe this scheme has the potential to have a positive impact on the whole district as any monies raised will be used to enhance discretionary services identified by the charitable trust established in support.<br><br>The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. |
| **Completed By** | Gabrielle Mancini |
| **Authorised By** | Joseph Holmes |

| **Date of Assessment** | 25/10/24 |
|---|---|

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

| | |
|---|---|
| **Context / Background**<br><br>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | In light of the Council's financial position and well-documented funding challenges across local government; there is a need to identify new ways of generating additional income in support of local services, in particular those which are discretionary. |
| **Proposals**<br><br>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action. | The creation of a voluntary scheme which would allow residents to make an additional charitable contribution on top of their council tax. The scheme would invite contributions towards the funding of local discretionary services via a dedicated charitable trust, which will be established to receive donations.<br><br>The projects and services funded through the revenue collected will be selected on an annual basis by the charitable trust, whose board will comprise both local authority and community members. |
| **Evidence / Intelligence**<br><br>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research | The principle of this scheme was inspired by Westminster Council, which introduced a scheme whereby residents in Band G and H properties make a voluntary contribution to an arms-length charity. The Council administers the charitable scheme on behalf of the charitable trust (including communications, engagement, information letters etc |

| | |
|---|---|
| findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments. | as well as finance and legal support). To date, the scheme has raised just under £2m for schemes and generates approximately £300k p.a.<br><br>Although it is not possible to calculate the likely revenue generation in West Berkshire, we believe this scheme has the potential to have a positive impact on the whole district as any monies raised will be used to enhance discretionary services identified by the charitable trust established in support. |
| **Alternatives considered / rejected**<br><br>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option. | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

| Protected Characteristic | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of Impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |
| **Disability** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |
| **Gender Reassignment** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Marriage & Civil Partnership** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |
| **Pregnancy & Maternity** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |
| **Race** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |
| **Sex** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sexual Orientation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |
| **Religion or Belief** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |
| **Areas of deprivation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |
| **Displaced communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can | | | |

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| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |
| **Care experienced people** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |
| **The Armed Forces Community** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | The introduction of a voluntary scheme will not have a negative impact as only residents who choose to make a contribution, and can afford to do so, will be impacted. | | | |

## Section 4: Review

**Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Review Date** | **1/9/2025** |
| **Person Responsible for Review** | **Gabrielle Mancini** |
| **Authorised By** | **Gabrielle Mancini** |

**Overview of Responses and Recommendations**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Budget Proposals 2025/26: Create a voluntary charitable contribution (via Council Tax payments) scheme** | **Service Director: Gabrielle Mancini**<br>**Author: Gabrielle Mancini** | **14th January 2025**<br>**(Corporate Board)** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Proposal:** | To create a voluntary scheme which would allow residents to make an additional charitable contribution on top of their council tax payments. |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total income 2024/25:** | N/A | **Initial proposed income 2025/26:** | c.£200k | **Recommended saving 2025/26:** | N/A |

**No. of responses:**

In total, 89 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows:

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 83 | 93.26 |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 0 | 0 |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 6 | 6.74 |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 4 | 4.49 |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 8 | 8.99 |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 5 | 5.62 |
| A District Councillor | 2 | 2.25 |
| A partner organisation | 1 | 1.12 |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 0 | 0 |
| Other - please specify below: | 2 | 2.25 |

We received no petitions

| | |
|---|---|
| **Key issues raised:** | *(Taken from CSR – Summary of Main Points)* |
| **Equality issues:** | No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the Equity Impact Assessment. |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

**Overview of Responses and Recommendations**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Suggestions for minimising any negative effects of the proposed change:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** |
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| | | |
| **Suggestions for other savings options:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** |
| | Undertake a review of contracts to ensure value for money | Contracts are reviewed on a regular basis, and all procurements are conducted in an open, transparent and competitive manner. |
| | | |
| | | |
| **Suggestions for income generation:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** |
| | **Using Just Giving to fund smaller, lower priority projects** | **It is suggested that trialling the proposed approach first to establish feasibility would be most beneficial and, if successful, the range of projects to be funded could be expanded.** |
| | **Undertake the project in partnership with local businesses** | **This suggestion is noted and will be considered.** |
| | **Set up a WB Lottery** | **A WB Lottery is already established. We may wish to revisit the marketing for this.** |
| | **Clean Air Zones with charges** | **This suggestion is noted and will be passed to the relevant Team.** |
| | | |
| **Officer conclusion and recommendation** | The response to the consultation indicates that residents are broadly supportive of the principle of taking forward a voluntary contribution scheme. As the range of responses is taken from residents from a variety of council tax bandings, it is proposed | |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

| | |
|---|---|
| **as a result of the responses:** | that the schemes should be marketed to all residents as there is likely to be appetite to donate from a wider range of residents given the ethos of the projects that the scheme will fund. |



**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

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**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Cease providing the Adult Respite (ARC) in the Community Service**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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**Why we consulted?**

Councils across the country continue to face unprecedented financial pressures, West Berkshire Council is no exception. Post the COVID pandemic, Councils including West Berkshire have experienced a high inflation environment, resulting in increasing costs and rising demand on our social services supporting our most vulnerable residents.

In 2025/26, we need to find £12.1 million in savings or income generation. This figure assumes that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £10.4 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.2 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified nine proposals.

For more information, please visit [https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget)

**Approach**

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on Monday, 11 November 2024 with feedback requested by midnight on Monday, 23 December 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index page[i], which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hub[ii].

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 considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

All 11 users of the service were contact on an individual basis, as were their families and the volunteers that provide the service.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people) and representative groups notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 11 November 2024, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We

also placed posters in our main offices and made them available to Services to put up as required.

## Proposal Background

West Berkshire Council's Adult Social Care Service currently provides an Adult Respite in the Community Service (ARC).

This service was original set up to provide a short-term respite service but is being used as a regular service for 11 clients that could be supported differently using alternative services.

## Legislative and Statutory Requirements

The Care Act 2014 governs what services the Council should provide as part of an individual's care package, what services the Council does not need to provide and how the Council can charge for these services.

## Proposal Details

To cease providing the Adult Respite (ARC) in the Community Service and offer the existing 11 clients alternative provision to meet their needs.

This proposal will save the Council £28,300 per year.

## Consultation Response

<u>Number of Responses</u>

In total, 48 responses were received.

We also received no petitions.

<u>Summary of Main Points</u>

The main points raised were that those individuals that use the service find it beneficial but there was a strong view that the service needed to provided differently.

<u>Summary of Responses by Question</u>

**1. Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 37 | 77.08 |
| A user of the service | 3 | 6.25 |

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 1 | 2.08 |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 2 | 4.17 |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 3 | 6.25 |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 9 | 18.75 |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 1 | 2.08 |
| A District Councillor | 1 | 2.08 |
| A partner organisation | 2 | 4.17 |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 0 | 0 |
| Other - please specify below: | 0 | 0 |

**2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to cease providing the Adult Respite in the Community (ARC) Service and offer the 11 existing clients alternative provision to meet their needs?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 16 | 38.10 |
| Agree | 7 | 16.67 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 5 | 11.90 |
| Disagree | 6 | 14.29 |
| Strongly Disagree | 8 | 19.05 |
| **Total** | **42** | **100%** |

The respondents mainly felt the service could be delivered differently but there was concern that the alternative service would be as a good.

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

This proposal will affect individuals with a learning disability and their families more than any other individuals,

**4. If you think our proposed change might have a negative effect on you or other people, do you have any suggestions for how we could minimise it, should we proceed? If so, please provide details.**

Will only affect the 11 individuals that currently use the service.

## 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.

- transfer the service into Shared Lives
- reduce energy costs
- increase the fees
- reduce public bin collections
- review contracts to ensure value for money

## 6. Any further comments?

- Can staffing cuts be made
- Use other services

## 7. Demographics of respondents

| | |
|---|---|
| Male | 42.86% |
| Female | 42.86% |
| Other | 0.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 14.29% |

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

Your name - Jo England
Job title - Joint Interim Service Director
Service unit – ASC & Public Health
Date – 3 January 2025

***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.*

[i] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget
[ii] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations

# West Berkshire Council

# Equity Impact Assessment

Contents

## Section 1: Summary details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Directorate and Service Area** | Adult Social Care & Public Health |
| **What is being assessed** (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | Adult Respite in the Community (ARC)<br><br>ARC is a service that provides respite to primarily learning disability (LD) clients in the community. |
| **Is this a new or existing function or policy?** | existing |
| **Summary of assessment**<br><br>Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?<br><br>(following completion of the assessment). | The original concept was for it to be used as a short term service but it is being used as a regular service for 11 LD clients that could be supported differently.<br><br>To end ARC service as this service is no longer an efficient use of resources and the service can be offered through other existing services. |
| **Completed By** | Jo England |
| **Authorised By** | Paul Coe |
| **Date of Assessment** | 18.10.24 |

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

| | |
|---|---|
| **Context / Background**<br><br>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | The Care Act 2014 governs what services the Council should provide as part of an individual's care package, what services the Council does not need to provide and how the Council can charge for these services.<br><br>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance<br><br>The Adult Respite in the Community Service (ARC) is a service that provides respite to primarily learning disability (LD) clients in the community.<br>The original concept was for it to be used as a short term service but it is being used as a regular service for 11 LD clients that could be supported differently.<br>To end ARC service as this service is no longer an efficient use of resources and the service can be offered through other existing services. |
| **Proposals**<br><br>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action. | The Adult Respite in the Community Service (ARC) is a service that provides respite to primarily learning disability (LD) clients in the community.<br>The original concept was for it to be used as a short term service but it is being used as a regular service for 11 LD clients that could be supported differently.<br>To end ARC service as this service is no longer an efficient use of resources and the service can be offered through other existing services. |
| **Evidence / Intelligence**<br><br>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service | There are currently 11 clients using this service and the service can be provided via other alternative services that are available. |

| | |
|---|---|
| users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments. | |
| **Alternatives considered / rejected**<br><br>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option. | The alternative is to do nothing, but this is a n expensive service for a very small number of clients that could be delivered through other services. |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

| Protected Characteristic | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of Impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | Most of the clients using this service are between 18 to 65.<br><br>Ending this service will mean a change in their service. | Ensure alternative provision is available | Jo England | April 2025 |
| **Disability** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | All the clients that use this service have a learning disability.<br><br>Ending this service will mean a change in their service. | Ensure alternative provision is available | Jo England | April 2025 |
| **Gender Reassignment** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Marriage & Civil Partnership** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Pregnancy & Maternity** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Race** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Sex** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Sexual Orientation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Religion or Belief** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Areas of deprivation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Displaced communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Care experienced people** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | All the clients that use this service are Adult Social Care clients.<br><br>Ending this service will mean a change in their service. | Ensure alternative provision is available | Jo England | April 2025 |
| **The Armed Forces Community** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 4: Review

**Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Review Date** | **Not required – Recommendation is not to proceed with the proposal** |
| **Person Responsible for Review** | **Jo England** |
| **Authorised By** | **Paul Coe** |

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Budget Proposals 2025/26: Cease providing the Adult Respite (ARC) in the Community Service** | | | **Service Director: Paul Coe**<br>**Author: Jo England** | | **14 Jan 2025**<br>**(Corporate Board)** |
| **Proposal:** | To cease providing the Adult Respite (ARC) in the Community Service and offer the existing 11 clients alternative provision to meet their needs. | | | | |
| **Total budget 2024/25:** | | **Initial proposed saving 2025/26:** | £28,300 | **Recommended saving 2025/26:** | |
| **No. of responses:** | In total, 48 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows: (see table below)<br><br>We also received 0 petitions: | | | | |
| **Key issues raised:** | 54.77% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to the proposal to cease the service with only 33.34% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. | | | | |

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 37 | 77.08% |
| A user of the service (delete if not appropriate) | 3 | 6.25% |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 1 | 2.08% |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 2 | 4.17% |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 3 | 6.25% |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 9 | 18.75% |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 1 | 2.08% |
| A District Councillor | 1 | 2.08% |
| A partner organisation | 2 | 4.17% |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 0 | 0.00% |
| Other - please specify below: | 0 | 0.00% |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Budget Proposals 2025/26: Cease providing the Adult Respite (ARC) in the Community Service</th><th>Service Director: Paul Coe<br>Author: Jo England</th><th>14 Jan 2025<br>(Corporate Board)</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3">Whilst the service provided at the moment is beneficial in a social aspect, to meet friends etc that would otherwise not attend the same day services, the provision to provide respite for carers is minimal.<br><br>In the interest of saving money, I feel the loss of this service in order that something else more worthwhile could continue would be perhaps a better option.<br><br>Whilst the service provided at the moment is beneficial in a social aspect, to meet friends etc that would otherwise not attend the same day services, the provision to provide respite for carers is minimal.<br><br>In the interest of saving money, I feel the loss of this service in order that something else more worthwhile could continue would be perhaps a better option.<br><br>It seems like there are a very small number of people using this service and if they can truly be given the same or very similar support through other services then this seems like a good idea.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Equality issues:</td><td colspan="3">No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the Equity Impact Assessment.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Suggestions for minimising any negative effects of the proposed change:</td><td>Suggestion</td><td colspan="2">Council response</td></tr>
<tr><td>Alternative provision must be straightforward, simple to access and of equivalent or improved provision to current arrangements.</td><td colspan="2">Any alternative provision will be from the range of other services already available.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Keep it. Restructure it and give it a chance to return to its previous cost effective full potential.<br><br>However if your mind is truly made up to cease the service then provide casual ARC staff with alternative casual opportunities in the other</td><td colspan="2">All ARC staff are casual staff and there is an option for these staff to become personal assistants and continue to offer the service to clients via a direct payment.</td></tr>
</table>

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Cease providing the Adult Respite (ARC) in the Community Service | Service Director: Paul Coe<br>Author: Jo England | 14 Jan 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|
| | 'existing services' you refer to. ARC staff rely on their income and have done so for many years (some for the full 20 years) so this will be a big impact to them. | |
| | The service is not really used for its original purpose of respite its more of a night out for service users. this money would be better spent in another service such as transferring funds to Shared Lives | Shared Lives is currently under budget so will be able to absorb some of this service without the transfer of funds |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| **Suggestions for other savings options:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** |
| | Increase rates. Offer the service as an outsourced service to other councils and/or private/public sectors. | This would increase the administration burden of this service and there is currently no appetite to use this service from other Local Authorities |
| | With ARC being a commissioned service you could increase income by increasing customer numbers that are using the service. This would require a service restructure using the previous years as an example of how to restructure. | Increasing client numbers will not automatically increase the income as individuals are financially assessed for their contribution |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Cease providing the Adult Respite (ARC) in the Community Service | | Service Director: Paul Coe<br>Author: Jo England | 14 Jan 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Overall the point is that ARC could be run in a far more cost effective way than it is currently. | | |
| | The service is not really used for its original purpose of respite its more of a night out for service users. this money would be better spent in another service such as transferring funds to Shared Lives | Shared Lives is currently under budget so will be able to absorb some of this service without the transfer of funds | |
| **Suggestions for income generation:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** | |
| | I am aware from speaking to some individuals that use the service, and seeing the service in action, that this could be offered cheaper. 2 or 3 staff taking 2 individuals out for dinner is not value for money. One personal assistant could do the same cheaper. Also I assume most of these individuals have a respite budget. This could be increased so parents may not get a Tuesday night free but the hours could build up so the individual gets a full Saturday out instead of an overnight stay.<br><br>The staff working these hours could become personal assistant or shared lives carers and offer the service that way but this would reduce the need | All ARC staff are casual staff and there is an option for these staff to become personal assistants and continue to offer the service to clients via a direct payment. | |



**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Cease providing the Adult Respite (ARC) in the Community Service | | | Service Director: Paul Coe<br>Author: Jo England | 14 Jan 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | to pay an administration post to oversee the ARC service | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:** | Alternative services can be provided in a more cost-effective way so it is the recommendation of Adult Social Care that this proposal proceeds. | | | |



**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

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**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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**Why we consulted?**

Councils across the country continue to face unprecedented financial pressures, West Berkshire Council is no exception. Post the COVID pandemic, Councils including West Berkshire have experienced a high inflation environment, resulting in increasing costs and rising demand on our social services supporting our most vulnerable residents.

In 2025/26, we need to find £12.1 million in savings or income generation. This figure assumes that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £10.4 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.2 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified nine proposals.

For more information, please visit [https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget)

**Approach**

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on Monday, 11 November 2024 with feedback requested by midnight on Monday, 23 December 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index page[i], which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hub[ii].

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 considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

Officers have highlighted the consultation during conversations with the public on matters relating to open space management.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people), local stakeholder charities, representative groups and partner organisations notifying them of the exercise and inviting their contributions. Service Directors contacted those organisations directly affected prior to them being made publicly available.

Finally, we issued a press release on 11 November 2024, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We

also placed posters in our main offices and made them available to Services to put up as required.

## Proposal Background

West Berkshire Council owns and manages many hundreds of hectares of land; from large commons and public parks to small open spaces in residential areas and around 1,000km of urban highway verge.

Over many years, in response to growing dog ownership and the demand for better owner behaviour and cleaner parks, councils have provided bins for the disposal of dog waste. Dog waste bins were often provided in response to public requests at a time when council budgets were less pressurised. It is now increasingly common for visitors to the countryside, parks, and open spaces to take litter home with them.

Until recently dog waste had to be disposed of separately from other waste and therefore councils provided separate bins for dog waste. Many dog waste and litter bins are also found close to each other in the same location, reflecting the requirement for separated waste.

The council's grounds maintenance contractor empties 326 dog waste and litter bins across the district. Litter bins and dog waste bins in parks and open spaces are emptied up to three times per week. Many bins are in isolated locations, requiring significant travelling time by the operative and consequently a significant cost to the local taxpayer.

## Legislative and Statutory Requirements

The Environmental Protection Act 1990 places a duty on local authorities to ensure that the public highway and any other relevant land they are responsible for such as parks and open spaces is, in so far as is practicable, kept clear of litter and refuse. We comply with this through the litter picking and street cleansing operations we run.

The provision of litter bins and dog waste bins is not a statutory requirement and therefore we are not duty bound to provide them to the extent currently available.

## Proposal Details

To remove 87 dog waste bins and 81 litter bins currently managed by the Grounds Maintenance contractor, on behalf of the Council's Countryside Service. A total of 168 bins overall.

This would provide an approximate saving of £20,000.

## Consultation Response

<u>Number of Responses</u>

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract**

**Consultation Summary Report**

In total, 233 responses were received.

Summary of Main Points

The overwhelming majority of responses disagreed or strongly disagreed (80%) with the proposed changes. Concerns were voiced regarding the potential adverse impacts on the environment, as well as the health and wellbeing of residents, particularly younger, older, and more vulnerable individuals. The prevailing sentiment conveyed a strong belief that the proposal offers no benefits, would affect everyone, and could lead to an increase in litter and dog waste in the environment. Consequently, there is a resounding call not to proceed with this proposal.

Around 16% of respondents either agreed, or strongly agreed with the proposal with some interesting suggestions being made about the possibility of; generating income from bin advertising (related pet products/veterinarian providers), introducing larger dual bins so reducing overall bin numbers, and implementing increased monitoring of bin use and removing less used bins over a period of time whilst reinforcing the current 'take your litter/waste home' messaging.

Summary of Responses by Question

**1. Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 228 | 97.85 |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 1 | 0.43 |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 5 | 2.15 |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 6 | 2.58 |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 12 | 5.15 |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 8 | 3.43 |
| A District Councillor | 4 | 1.72 |
| A partner organisation | 1 | 0.43 |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 1 | 0.43 |
| Other - please specify below: | 3 | 1.29 |

The 'Other' (and those who gave additional information) were: Parish Council, someone on behalf of Hungerford Town Council, the Greener Greenham Group, an individual and a Dog owner

**2. Are you a dog owner?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 125 | 53.65 |
| No | 108 | 46.35 |
| **Total** | **233** | **100%** |

**3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to remove 87 dog waste bins and 81 litter bins currently managed by the grounds maintenance contractor, on behalf of the Council's Countryside Service?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 22 | 9.69 |
| Agree | 15 | 6.61 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 10 | 4.41 |
| Disagree | 30 | 13.22 |
| Strongly Disagree | 150 | 66.08 |
| **Total** | **227** | **100%** |

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

167 responses received. There is a widespread perception among respondents that these proposals will have a broad impact, affecting everyone, as voiced by the majority of participants. Notably, there is a genuine concern that the safety and wellbeing of children and young families will be compromised, posing risks to public health. Additionally, respondents expressed apprehension about the potential harm to the environment, anticipating an increase in litter and dog waste on the ground. Some participants also highlighted the potential impact on the elderly and less mobile individuals who would have to carry litter and dog poo back home with them.

**5. If you think our proposed change might have a negative effect on you or other people, do you have any suggestions for how we could minimise it, should we proceed? If so, please provide details.**

155 responses received. There is a general consensus that negative impacts cannot be mitigated. Residents believe that the removal of bins will lead to more litter and more dog waste on paths. Some respondents advocated greater monitoring, to establish which bins were better used than others and to focus on removing those over time. Further that removing bins gradually over time would lead the pubic to have much less reliance on the council providing bins.

A considerable number of participants suggested that effective communication and education about the proposal could help mitigate its impact. Some respondents also recommended increased enforcement against littering and failure to pick up dog waste.

**6. 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.**

121 responses received.

- Reduce council staff and Members, not bins and reduce pay and benefits to staff
- Use car parking income to fund the bin collections
- Introduce a local dog license scheme and charge dog owners
- Like Green Bin subscriptions, have a dog waste subscription and charge dog owners extra for the privilege of the collection of dog waste
- Use volunteers and local offenders on community service to empty bins
- Raise council tax against all the rich residents
- Reduce the number of bins over time and eventually withdraw the service
- Use larger dual bins to reduce bin numbers overall

**7. Any further comments?**

64 responses received. There wasn't anything in the responses which was significantly different from the list above. It appears people consider dog and litter bins a necessity because dog owners and other residents won't comply with any sensible request to take dog and litter waste home with them. Many respondents consider that our residential areas are much better places with bins rather than without them.

**8. Demographics of respondents**

More females than males responded to the consultation and were predominantly of White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British ethnicity. Most respondents were in the from the 45 to 75 age group.

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

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract**

**Consultation Summary Report**

---

**Paul Hendry**
**Countryside Manager**
**Environment Department**
**20/12/2024**

***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.*

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[i] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget
[ii] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations

# West Berkshire Council

# Equity Impact Assessment

March 2023

Contents

## Section 1: Summary details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Directorate and Service Area** | Place, Countryside |
| **What is being assessed** (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | Remove a proportion of litter and dog bins from the Grounds Maintenance contract. |
| **Is this a new or existing function or policy?** | Existing function. |
| **Summary of assessment**<br><br>Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?<br><br>(following completion of the assessment). | This proposal may result in the permanent withdrawal of approximately 50% of the dog and litter bins currently provided by the Countryside team. Users everywhere else will be encouraged to take their waste home to dispose of in their black wheelie bins. The council will however open up discussions with local parish and town councils with a view to devolving responsibility to them. This works well in some parishes where WBC empty parish bins on their behalf with the costs being recharged.<br><br>This proposal is not expected to have any detrimental impact on those with protected characteristics or other groups within the community. |
| **Completed By** | Paul Hendry |
| **Authorised By** | |
| **Date of Assessment** | 01/11/2024 |

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

| | |
|---|---|
| **Context / Background**<br><br>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | The current financial pressures require that the council considers all options for making savings within service areas. Over the years the number of dog and littler bins maintained by the Countryside Service has grown according to demand. These bins were installed at a time when the financial situation within the council was much less difficult and in some cases bins were erected in response to public demand but without consideration of the future implications for budgets. Bins were historically installed to meet a demand at a particular point in time but there has never been a review of whether the bins are still required, or whether the numbers can be reduced and rationalised.<br><br>It should also be noted that dog poo was previously considered to be hazardous waste but this is no longer the case and dog waste can now be disposed on in household wheeled bins. |
| **Proposals**<br><br>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action. | This proposal will result in the permanent withdrawal of approximately 50% of the dog and litter bins currently provided by the Countryside Service. This will leave a basic provision of dog and litter bins at selected high-profile locations such as public parks, play areas, selected visitor destinations, sports fields and large open spaces which are used for leisure and recreation purposes. Users everywhere else will be encouraged to take their waste home to dispose of in their black wheelie bins.<br><br>The council will therefore cease to provide dog and litter bins at the following locations; small residential grass areas, on public rights of way, on grass verges, nor on common land (other than Greenham Common and Snelsmore Common Country Park).<br><br>It is important to note that the council will however open up discussions with local parishes to explore options for the parishes to take on the maintenance and emptying of all bins within the parish. This is an option which works well elsewhere and so West Berkshire Council's (WBC) contractor do empty bins on a parishes behalf with the costs then being recharged to the parish on an annual basis. Parishes will be encouraged to accept responsibility for bins in a parish and the council will assist them to find a suitable alternative contractor, or WBC's contractor will continue to service the bins but with an annual recharge. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | It is important to state that if this proposal is agreed then the council will be required to negotiate with our existing contractor and their agreement to the proposal will be required before this can be implemented; actual cost savings will therefore be subject to change.<br><br>Please refer to the list of litter and dog waste bins that we are responsible for and are proposing for removal. |
| **Evidence / Intelligence**<br><br>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments. | A similar previous consultation did not highlight any detrimental impacts on those with protected characteristics or other groups within the community.<br><br>Post Consultation:<br><br>This new consultation raised concerns about those with mobility restrictions or with a disability having to carry dog poo home with them instead of depositing the poo bag in a nearby bin. As the bins are not going to be removed then this issue is no longer a consideration. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Alternatives considered / rejected**<br><br>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option. | Removing all litter bins and dog waste bins that we currently provide - however this is not something that we want to do, as it will be detrimental to the quality of the environment<br>Encouraging other local organisations or community groups to 'adopt' or sponsor a litter bin by covering the costs of its emptying and maintenance, which would mean that we could retain it in place; this is something that we are still open to and if this could be of interest to you, we'd encourage you to mention this in your consultation response |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

| Protected Characteristic | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of Impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| Disability | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| Gender Reassignment | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| Marriage & Civil Partnership | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| Pregnancy & Maternity | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| Race | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| Sex | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| Sexual Orientation | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| Religion or Belief | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Areas of deprivation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Displaced communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Care experienced people** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **The Armed Forces Community** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 4: Review

**Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Review Date** | **03/01/2025 – No further review required** |
| **Person Responsible for Review** | **Paul Hendry** |
| **Authorised By** | |

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**Overview of Responses and Recommendations**

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract | | | | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Proposal:** | To remove 87 dog waste bins and 81 litter bins currently managed by the Grounds Maintenance contractor, on behalf of the Council's Countryside Service. A total of 168 bins overall. | | | | |
| **Total budget 2024/25:** | £54,000 | **Initial proposed saving 2025/26:** | £20,000 | **Recommended saving 2025/26:** | £20,000 (dependent on discussions with parishes) |
| **No. of responses:** | In total, 233 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows: | | | | |

**1. Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 228 | 97.85 |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 1 | 0.43 |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 5 | 2.15 |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 6 | 2.58 |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 12 | 5.15 |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 8 | 3.43 |
| A District Councillor | 4 | 1.72 |
| A partner organisation | 1 | 0.43 |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 1 | 0.43 |
| Other - please specify below: | 3 | 1.29 |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: | |
|---|---|---|

**2. Are you a dog owner?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 125 | 53.65 |
| No | 108 | 46.35 |
| **Total** | **233** | **100%** |

**3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to remove 87 dog waste bins and 81 litter bins currently managed by the grounds maintenance contractor, on behalf of the Council's Countryside Service?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 22 | 9.69 |
| Agree | 15 | 6.61 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 10 | 4.41 |
| Disagree | 30 | 13.22 |
| Strongly Disagree | 150 | 66.08 |
| **Total** | **227** | **100%** |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Key issues raised:** | The overwhelming majority of responses disagreed or strongly disagreed (79.3%) with the proposed changes. Concerns were voiced regarding the potential adverse impacts on the environment, as well as the health and wellbeing of residents, particularly younger, older, and more vulnerable individuals. The prevailing sentiment |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: | |
|---|---|---|
| | conveyed a strong belief that the proposal offers no public benefit, would impact everyone, and could lead to an increase in litter and dog waste in the environment. Notably, there is a concern that the safety and wellbeing of children and young families will be compromised, posing risks to public health. Some participants also highlighted the potential impact on the elderly and less mobile individuals who would have to carry litter and dog poo back home with them. Consequently, there appears to be a resounding call not to proceed with this proposal.<br><br>Around 16% of respondents either agreed, or strongly agreed with the proposal with some interesting suggestions being made about the possibility of; generating income from bin advertising (related pet products/veterinarian providers), introducing larger dual bins so reducing overall bin numbers, and implementing increased monitoring of bin use and removing less used bins over a period of time whilst reinforcing the current 'take your litter/waste home' messaging. | |
| **Equality issues:** | No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the Equity Impact Assessment. | |
| **Suggestions for minimising any negative effects of the proposed change:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** |
| | Don't remove the bins (and similar, one of many such comments). | This may well be the outcome for those bins which cannot be passed to the care of parishes. We may still remove some bins which are less well used and/or replace bins with dual bins and larger bins so reducing overall numbers. |
| | I think you should do it but spend the money on waste removal/recycling in another way. | The saving is required in order to meet the council's financial objectives. |
| | Run some analysis on the amount of waste collected in each area before deciding which bins, if any, should be removed (and similar suggestions about monitoring use and removing bins over time). | A useful suggestion. One outcome might be to reduce the numbers of bins in some areas if the data suggests they are not required. |
| | Education and messaging: Reducing the number of bins in some locations over time would help towards training people to take litter home/educate people to take litter | Yes, we will have to continue to engage with the public and share messages focussed on 'taking dog and litter waste home', especially if the bins are full. |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract | | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: |
|---|---|---|
| | and dog poo home/public awareness campaign about cleaning up after your dog is required to go along with the bin removal. | |
| | Larger bins and dual bins: Replace current bins with larger bins and dual bins and reduce the numbers overall. | There is an issue with larger bins as dog waste in particular is heavy. We will look at options for larger bins and dual bins and perhaps reduce the overall numbers of bins in public spaces. |
| | Monitoring: Establish a data-driven approach to bin management by installing sensors in remaining bins to monitor fill levels. This would allow for more efficient collection scheduling and help identify areas where additional capacity may be needed/ establish best used locations and reduce bins elsewhere. | A useful suggestion. One outcome might be to reduce the numbers of bins in some areas if the data suggests they are not required. |
| | Enforcement: Start fining people/Take enforcement and education seriously, by properly funding teams to employ and train staff to communicate, patrol and issue fines/educate then fine people. | We will discuss enforcement options with colleagues in Public Protection. |
| | Use volunteers/youth offenders/community payback and similar to empty bins. | This is not a sustainable nor reliable form of labour for a service provision which requires routine. |
| | Every dog owner should be required to have an annual dog license if they wish to own a dog in the district. The annual fee should then be ring fenced and used for the maintenance of Dog bins and clearing up Dog mess plus the cost of administering the scheme. Why should non dog owners have to pay for cleaning up dog owners poo! | This could be a matter for national policy. |
| | Don't spend money on stackable boxes for waste collection or replacing perfectly good boxes with new ones. It will save quid or two. | Our Waste Service team have been advised of this suggestion. |
| | | |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract | | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| **Suggestions for other savings options:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** | |
| | Is it possible to reduce the frequency roads are swept in small villages? Often cars are parked on the roads and so the edges aren't swept as the sweeper had to drive around them so I feel this is a waste of time and resources. | Our Waste Services Team have been advised of this suggestion. | |
| | I'm in favour of using less street lighting at night and losing the mobile library. | Streetlighting is part of a separate consultation exercise. | |
| | There are lots of empty properties, shop uppers that should be used for homes. Second homes unused should be heavily penalised. Encourage more recycling at home, instead of the collection service of food waste. | Housing colleagues have been advised of this suggestion. | |
| | Reduce number of final salary pension schemes. | . The LGPS changed from a final salary scheme to a career average scheme on 1 April 2014 | |
| | Stop paying for kids transport to and from school. Parents should be doing that. The costs to the council for this is crippling us. If we stop that, there will be more funds for other services. | Suggestion forwarded to the Home to School Transport team | |
| | By reducing staff and councillors salaries/ Get rid of council managers. | The Council's management structure and headcount are regularly reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for the effective oversight of teams and to ensure we are able to deliver good services for our residents and rate payers. | |
| | Maybe cut back on expenses within the council. There must be some 'perks' which could be dispensed with. | The payment of expenses within the Council is monitored and is subject to strict eligibility rules. | |
| | Retrofit council-owned buildings with energy-efficient lighting, heating systems, and solar panels to reduce | Grateful for your comprehensive set of suggestions. Many of these suggestions and more are under discussion or have already been | |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract | | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | utility costs. Install motion-sensor lighting in public areas like parks and car parks. Partner with neighbouring councils to share resources such as IT systems, procurement, or waste management. Move services online to reduce administrative costs (e.g., online payments, e-governance portals) Transition to electric vehicles or optimize routes for council vehicles to reduce fuel and maintenance costs. Use bulk purchasing or collaborative procurement to get better deals on goods and services. Review supplier contracts regularly to ensure value for money. Consider flexible working arrangements (e.g., hybrid working) to reduce office space requirements. Schedule regular maintenance for council-owned properties and infrastructure to avoid costly emergency repairs. Eliminate paper-based systems and rely on digital documentation to save on printing and mailing costs. (There's exceptions with elderly or vulnerable people). Lease out underutilized buildings or land for commercial or community use. Rent out council-owned facilities (e.g., halls, sports venues) for private events. But make it accessible rather than extortionate prices otherwise no one will rent it. Promote local tourism through festivals, events, and attractions to boost revenue from permits, fees, and visitors. The local market needs more variety and current team is not welcoming. Set up council-owned businesses, such as renewable energy projects, and sell surplus energy back to the grid. Review and sell off/rent unused or surplus council land and properties to generate capital. Lots of council houses are empty and not being used! | implemented. We will reflect on these to see if we are not currently maximising the potential benefits achievable. Your comment regarding the local market is a matter for the relevant Town Council and we will aim to share it with them. | |



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**Overview of Responses and Recommendations**

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract | | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | It is great having ambitions like taking football back to Faraday road, 20mph speed limits and pedestrianisation, but it is such a waste of money when you can't 'keep the lights on'. Prioritise future work on improving our environment and well being instead of manifesto promises that don't make a difference to the majority of residents. | Your comment has been noted and will be reflected upon. | |
| | Not really any options to cut services as they are so stretched. Raise income from local businesses, or multinational companies that have offices in the area. Raise rates. | Business Rates is a rateable value which is set by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), an agency of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs. | |
| | Stop building cycle lanes that are not used. | These are capital projects most often paid for through government grants or developer contributions (from development). Generally capital expenditure is being reduced to reduce the impact of council borrowing. | |
| | Reduce benefit fraud - anecdotally we still hear of people taking advantage of the system. | Your comment has been noted and will be reflected upon. | |
| | How regular are reviews on the use of contractors/agencies/professional services etc? From looking at the >£500 spend for Jul-Sep, over 72% of the spend is on these items. Is this actually the most efficient way of working? With the council tax higher than ever but less provided to residents, it seems illogical that £45m/quarter is efficient when you consider everyone involved has to make a margin. As a resident I would be interested to see a deeper dive into some of these services when asked about savings & efficiencies. Maybe £20k can be saved on less bins, but how much is paid on retention agreements or 'service' fees for contracted parties? What's the cost of | The council is reducing expenditure on agency staff.<br><br>Other comments here are useful and have been passed to the relevant services for attention. | |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract | | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | resurfacing a road vs filling potholes & paying for damage? Can the spend & budget be illustrated in relation to the people impacted instead of simply total spend? £20k on bins could impact a vast number of people while £1.1m on just 3 months of vehicle hire may only be impacting 1000 people. In which case, revisit the vehicle hire! Also, with 3rd parties digging up roads & pavements for maintenance & cable/pipe laying, could it be required for them to resurface the whole width of where they are working? This is just leaving the location in the same state as it was found & may help reduce road & pavement damage & uneven surfaces by avoiding multiple patches that are quickly weathered & become hazardous. | | |
| | Cut down on non-essential expenses by the council. | The Council has already implemented several measures to significantly reduce expenses. There is a robust system in place for approving all expenses. | |
| | Get rid of the dead wood in your organisation. Those on long term sick leave, those who are always taking time off sick, those that don't do their job or add no value to the organisation. Run the council more like a business, where you have to make decisions based on targets and budgets that have to be realistic and adhered to. Hold people accountable. Get rid of the useless local councillors who do nothing for their local community. | Thanks for your comments. The Council continues to take measure to increase efficiency and finding ways to generate savings and income. | |
| | Take a look at the Chief Exec's pay! | Your comment has been noted. | |
| | From what I have seen and heard, things move very slowly in the council. I am sure efficiency savings by the council could be made if they have staff working in the | The Council continually reviews how and where staff work from to ensure they remain appropriate and we can continue to deliver good quality services. For many roles, it is feasible for staff to work | |



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**Overview of Responses and Recommendations**

| **Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract** | | **Service Director: Jon Winstanley**<br>**Author:** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | office as opposed to from home. The situation for council users seems to be one of frustration which has been worse since covid and work from home situation. | from home some days of the week. A 'hybrid' working approach can be beneficial for some staff and can also help the Council to achieve savings e.g. by reducing the amount of desk spaces required and avoiding certain travel expenses. | |
| | Not in this area. I do think your other cost-saving proposals are sound. Ultimately you need to increase council tax on the rich people who live in big houses, and on anyone with a second home. | Your comment has been noted and will be reflected upon. | |
| | Improve the contract provision and management. | There are 325 bins with 750 (average) emptying occasions each week. This is the absolute maximum number the contractor can manage with the current workforce. Increased use and demand in some areas is stretching the service. We cannot increase either bins nor emptying frequency due to cost. The intention is to consider options to pass the bins onto local councils who may be better placed to manage bins in the future, tailoring the service to local need for each parish. | |
| | Bring all services in house and stop overspending on contractors who do a half-hearted job. | Consideration has been given to an in-house service for some contracts in the Countryside Service but the overheads in terms of depot provision is a significant consideration. We do achieve some economies of scale under current contractual arrangements. In-house provision remains an option in the future. | |
| | If you want to save travel times and money. Hire local people or outsource to local parish councils | Devolution and outsourcing have been a feature of this service delivery in this area of council service delivery for some years. We have devolved some open spaces and playgrounds to local councils. The local wildlife trust now manage all our countryside assets making savings and achieving investments. | |
| **Suggestions for income generation:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** | |
| | Sponsorship. Could pet shops take some responsibility and sponsor dog poo bins which they could also use for | Another interesting suggestion which we will explore through our asset sponsorship contractor. | |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| **Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract** | **Service Director: Jon Winstanley**<br>**Author:** | |
|---|---|---|
| | advertising/dog food manufacturers/vets offer financial assistance/sponsorship. | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| **Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:** | There are 325 bins provided as part of our grounds maintenance contract across the district, with 750 (average) emptying occasions each week. This is the absolute maximum number the contractor can manage with the current allocated workforce. Increased use and demand in some areas, and contractor recruitment and retention issues are stretching the service to the point where some bins periodically overflow. We cannot continue to increase the budget to accommodate increased bin servicing and in fact there is a case to reduce the number of bins overall in order to better service those bins which remain. The bins which are currently installed across the district were provided over the course of many years, and in response to local issues at that point in time. There has never been a systematic review of their provision until now.<br><br>Public feedback has been very useful. It is very clear in this consultation exercise, and in last year's consultation, that the public value the provision of dog and litter bins and that their removal is not welcome. The prevailing sentiment conveyed a strong belief that the proposal offers no public benefit, would impact everyone, and could lead to an increase in litter and dog waste in the environment. Notably, there is a concern that the safety and wellbeing of children and young families will be compromised, posing risks to public health. The removal of a number of dog and litter bins with strong public messaging about taking waste home for disposal in wheeled bins should not necessarily lead to uncreased incidences of litter and dog fouling, however this is a likely outcome at least in the short term.<br><br>There appears to be little concern about the proposal to transfer the ongoing maintenance and emptying of specific dog bins to town and parish councils and this is an arrangement which works well elsewhere with many parishes making their own arrangements with a local contractor. Whilst there is an option for the costs of emptying and maintenance to be passed to local council with service delivery being retained by WBC this however is the least preferred option. This option does address the current issues as set out above nor does it not allow for the tailoring of the service to meet the specific needs of local communities. | |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract | | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | It is clear from the consultation that whilst it is important to retain a litter and dog bin provision there may now be an opportunity to reduce the number of bins in some locations and to replace some of these with larger capacity bins and dual bins which will help to prevent bins overflowing. It is interesting to note that many responses made reference to the importance of public messaging, i.e. pick up after your dog/don't leave poo bags in public places, or on top of already full bins. And many responses made reference to a need for greater enforcement.<br><br>Clearly contractor performance has to improve. However, recruitment and retention of staff engaged in this work remains a difficulty for the contractor, not just in WBC but across the industry, particularly in the south of England. In terms of income generation, it may be possible for us to look at opportunities for bins sponsorship. Some organisations and local businesses may welcome the opportunity to advertise on bins, especially pet related products and businesses.<br><br>Considering all the issues raised and the responses, it is recommended that:<br><br>1. The Council opens up discussions with local town and parish councils with a view to devolving responsibility for the provision of dog and litter bins into their care and management. This could allow local councils to tailor the service to the needs of the community. This cannot be achieved under the current contract arrangements where bins are either emptied once or up to 3 times per week depending on location, and with very little room for flexibility or capacity to increase provision. Please note that this proposal relates to grounds maintenance bins only and does not include town centre litter bins provided by the Council's Waste Service.<br>o As previously implemented for Newbury Town Council where a number of bins were transferred into their care, a small sum to cover the replacement cost of any damaged or deteriorating bins could be payable by the Council.<br>o Devolved bins will thereafter be the sole responsibility of the local town or parish council.<br>2. The Council opens up negotiations with the current grounds maintenance contractor to agree a savings expectation as soon as possible, once the discussion with interested parishes have concluded. It is likely that the proposed intention to remove about 87 dog bins and 81 litter bins from the current ground maintenance contract will have to be achieved in order to meet the proposed saving target.<br>3. The Council reviews the frequency of use and the location of any remaining bins which are not transferred to local councils and considers a reduction in the numbers of bins alongside options to replace certain bins with larger alternatives, or dual bins. | | |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove a proportion of the litter bins and dog waste bins from the Grounds Maintenance Contract | | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |



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**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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**Why we consulted?**

Councils across the country continue to face unprecedented financial pressures, West Berkshire Council is no exception. Post the COVID pandemic, Councils including West Berkshire have experienced a high inflation environment, resulting in increasing costs and rising demand on our social services supporting our most vulnerable residents.

In 2025/26, we need to find £12.1 million in savings or income generation. This figure assumes that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £10.4 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.2 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified nine proposals.

For more information, please visit https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget

**Approach**

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on Monday, 11 November 2024 with feedback requested by midnight on Monday, 23 December 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index page[i], which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hub[ii].

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 considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

A meeting also took place between Council officers and Thames Valley Police to discuss the implications of this proposal.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people).

Finally, we issued a press release on 11 November 2024, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and made them available to Services to put up as required.

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am**

**Consultation Summary Report**

---

## Proposal Background

The Council provides much of the street lighting in West Berkshire. These streetlights are already dimmed up to 70% in residential locations to save energy. The current budget to maintain these is just over £1m.

We have a team of officers and a Term Maintenance Contract with Volker Highways Ltd in place to deliver the full range of highway maintenance services.

## Legislative and Statutory Requirements

In accordance with the Highways Act 1980, there is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide public lighting. Councils do, however, have the power to provide lighting and once provided, have a duty of care to ensure that assets for which they retain responsibility are maintained in a safe condition.

## Proposal Details

To turn off streetlights in residential locations between midnight and 5am. This will provide an annual saving of £52,000 (5% of the budget).

## Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total, 525 responses were received.

We received no petitions, but letters from the following:

- The Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley
- Thames Valley Police

Summary of Main Points

People appeared to be split fairly equally for or against this proposal. Those against raised issues of fears for increased crime and anti-social behaviour, and people, especially women, feeling more vulnerable if out during the hours the lights are switched off. Those in favour highlighted several benefits the proposal may have.

A number of responses suggested alternative timings for switching of street lights, including both switching them off for a shorter, and a longer, period.

Alternative proposals for this were to switch off every other streetlight, or to use motion-sensor lighting.

Thames Valley Police were also against the proposal due to the potential increase in crime, and the fear of crime, and the implications this would have for their resources.

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am**

**Consultation Summary Report**

Summary of Responses by Question

**1. Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 502 | 95.62% |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 13 | 2.48% |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 10 | 1.90% |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 14 | 2.67% |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 17 | 3.24% |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 10 | 1.90% |
| A District Councillor | 4 | 0.76% |
| A partner organisation | 5 | 0.95% |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 0 | 0.00% |
| Other - please specify below: | 5 | 0.95% |

The others were listed as a Violence Against Women & Girls consultant, two parish councils, a Parish council officer, and Hungerford Town Council.

**2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to turn off streetlights in residential locations between midnight and 5am?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 166 | 32.87% |
| Agree | 85 | 16.83% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 18 | 3.56% |
| Disagree | 45 | 8.91% |
| Strongly Disagree | 191 | 37.82% |
| **Total** | **505** | **100%** |

Comments were received both for and against the proposal. The most frequent comments made against the proposal were that it may lead to an increase in crime, and make people feel more vulnerable, especially women. Concern was also raised about some people needing to walk home after midnight, and that it may result in more accidents.

Those in favour highlighted the benefits of reduced light pollution, saving energy, benefits to wildlife, and helping people sleep at night. A number of comments suggested that most people are not out at these hours, but there were also suggestions for different hours of switch-off.

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

354 responses received. Many respondents highlighted the need for people still to be out walking later at night or earlier in the morning due to their working hours, the times of the last trains, or social activities (particularly at weekends). Further comments related to the potential for increased crime or anti-social behaviour, and increased feelings of vulnerability, especially women and the elderly. It may also lead to more accidents, with people commenting on uneven walking surfaces.

### 4. If you think our proposed change might have a negative effect on you or other people, do you have any suggestions for how we could minimise it, should we proceed? If so, please provide details.

287 responses received. The most popular suggestions were to review the hours that the lights would be switched off, especially at weekends, turn off only every other light, or to keep the lights on in certain areas.

### 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.

234 responses received. For street lighting, suggestions were to use solar power and/or motion sensor lighting, to switch off the lights for longer, or to increase the spacing between lights.

For elsewhere in the Council, the most popular suggestions were to reduce Council staff or salaries and to stop spending on vanity projects.

### 6. Any further comments?

126 responses received. Other than those either reiterating their support or opposition, some respondents were asking why we should need to make savings or questioning whether the consultation would be meaningful.

### 7. Demographics of respondents

| Gender | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 173 | 39.05% |
| Female | 230 | 51.92% |
| Other | 0 | 0.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 40 | 9.03% |

| Disability, long-term illness, or health-condition | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 73 | 21.92% |
| No | 232 | 69.67% |
| Prefer not to say | 28 | 8.41% |

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am**

**Consultation Summary Report**

| Age | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Under 18 | 2 | 0.45% |
| 18-24 | 11 | 2.48% |
| 25-34 | 33 | 7.43% |
| 35-44 | 52 | 11.71% |
| 45-54 | 96 | 21.62% |
| 55-64 | 93 | 20.95% |
| 65-74 | 81 | 18.24% |
| 75 and over | 31 | 6.98% |
| Prefer not to say | 45 | 10.14% |

| Ethnic group | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Prefer not to say | 25 | 7.29% |
| White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British | 296 | 86.30% |
| White Irish | 2 | 0.58% |
| White other | 7 | 2.04% |
| Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma | 1 | 0.29% |
| Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups | 4 | 1.17% |
| Asian or Asian British | 5 | 1.46% |
| Black, Black British, Caribbean or African | 1 | 0.29% |
| Other ethnic group – British, Latin mix Italian | 2 | 0.58% |

| Post Code | Responses | Post Code | Responses | Post Code | Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OX26 | 1 | RG15 | 2 | RG24 | 1 |
| RG7 | 56 | RG17 | 30 | RG26 | 1 |
| RG8 | 15 | RG18 | 47 | RG30 | 2 |
| RG10 | 2 | RG19 | 58 | RG31 | 37 |
| RG14 | 141 | RG20 | 24 | SL5 | 1 |

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

Peter Walker
Service Lead – Highways & Transport
Environment Department
6 January 2025

***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.*

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[i] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget
[ii] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations

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# West Berkshire Council

# Equity Impact Assessment

January 2025

Contents

## Section 1: Summary details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Directorate and Service Area** | Place/Environment |
| **What is being assessed** (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | Function |
| **Is this a new or existing function or policy?** | Existing |
| **Summary of assessment**<br><br>Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?<br><br>(following completion of the assessment). | Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am |
| **Completed By** | Peter Walker |
| **Authorised By** | |
| **Date of Assessment** | 15 October 2024 |

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

| | |
|---|---|
| **Context / Background**<br><br>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | The Council provides much of the street lighting in West Berkshire. These streetlights are already dimmed up to 70% in residential locations to save energy. The current budget to maintain these is just over £1m.<br><br>We have a team of officers and a Term Maintenance contract with Volker Highways Ltd in place to deliver the full range of highway maintenance services.<br><br>In accordance with the Highways Act 1980, there is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide public lighting. Councils do, however, have the power to provide lighting and once provided, have a duty of care to ensure that assets for which they retain responsibility are maintained in a safe condition. |
| **Proposals**<br><br>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action. | Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am<br><br>To reduce Council spending<br><br>To tackle increasing energy costs |
| **Evidence / Intelligence**<br><br>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that | Evidence from studies by UCL and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, assessing data from 62 local authorities, suggests that removing or reducing residential street lights at night, saves energy costs and reduces carbon emissions. It also found that there was no resultant increase in car collisions or crime. |

| | |
|---|---|
| supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments. | Further, a study by the universities of York and Newcastle showed that it also has benefits for nocturnal wildlife. This assists the Council meet its strategy priority of "Tackling the climate and ecological emergency". |
| **Alternatives considered / rejected**<br><br>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option. | No other options to reduce expenditure in this area have been identified. |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

| Protected Characteristic | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of Impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | **Action owner*** (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | Younger and older people may feel less safe at night. | There is no specific information to support which groups may perceive to be more at risk, but evidence from Essex County Council indicates that crime actually decreased and there was no increase in road collisions. | n/a | n/a |
| **Disability** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | People with disabilities may feel less safe at night. | | | |
| **Gender Reassignment** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated. | | | |
| **Marriage & Civil Partnership** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated. | | | |
| **Pregnancy & Maternity** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated. | | | |
| **Race** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | People from minority groups may feel less safe at night. | | | |
| **Sex** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | Women may feel less safe at night. | | | |
| **Sexual Orientation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated. | | | |
| **Religion or Belief** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated. | | | |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural communities** | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | Very few rural communities have Council-provided street lighting. Removing overnight lighting will aid wildlife. | There is no specific information to support which groups may perceive to be more at risk, but evidence from Essex County Council indicates that crime actually decreased and there was no increase in road collisions. | n/a | n/a |
| **Areas of deprivation** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | People may feel less safe at night. | | | |
| **Displaced communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated. | | | |
| **Care experienced people** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated. | | | |
| **The Armed Forces Community** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated. | | | |

## Section 4: Review

**Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Review Date** | **N/A as this proposal will not be implemented at this time.** |
| **Person Responsible for Review** | **N/A** |
| **Authorised By** | |

**Overview of Responses and Recommendations**

| **Budget Proposals 2025/26: Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am** | **Service Director: Jon Winstanley**<br>**Author: Peter Walker** | **14 January 2025 (Corporate Board)** |
|---|---|---|

| **Proposal:** | To turn off streetlights in residential locations between midnight and 5am. This will provide an annual saving of £52,000 (5% of the budget). | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Total budget 2024/25:** | £1,088,370 | **Initial proposed saving 2025/26:** | £52,000 (5% of budget) | **Recommended saving 2025/26:** | £40,000 |

**No. of responses:**

In total, 525 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows:

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 502 | 95.62% |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 13 | 2.48% |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 10 | 1.90% |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 14 | 2.67% |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 17 | 3.24% |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 10 | 1.90% |
| A District Councillor | 4 | 0.76% |
| A partner organisation | 5 | 0.95% |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 0 | 0.00% |
| Other – A Violence Against Women & Girls consultant, 2 Parish Councils, a Parish Council officer, Hungerford Town Council | 5 | 0.95% |

We received no petitions, but letters from the following:

- The Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley
- Thames Valley Police

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| **Budget Proposals 2025/26: Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am** | **Service Director: Jon Winstanley**<br>**Author: Peter Walker** | **14 January 2025 (Corporate Board)** |
|---|---|---|

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Key issues raised:** | People appeared to be split fairly equally for or against this proposal. Those against raised issues of fears for increased crime and anti-social behaviour, and people, especially women, feeling more vulnerable if out during the hours the lights are switched off. Those in favour highlighted several benefits the proposal may have.<br><br>A number of responses suggested alternative timings for switching of street lights, including both switching them off for a shorter, and a longer, period.<br><br>Alternative proposals for this were to switch off every other streetlight, or to use motion-sensor lighting.<br><br>Thames Valley Police were also against the proposal due to the potential increase in crime, and the fear of crime, and the implications this would have for their resources. | |
| **Equality issues:** | No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the Equity Impact Assessment. | |
| **Suggestions for minimising any negative effects of the proposed change:** | **Suggestion (no. of responses)** | **Council response** |
| | Reduce the hours street lights are switched off (18) | Following feedback received through this consultation, the Council has identified alternative, less contentious ways of making savings in street lighting. |
| | Turn off every other light (18) | |
| | Keep lights on in certain areas (e.g. town centres, high crime areas) (7) | |
| | Dim rather than switch off entirely (5) | |
| **Suggestions for other savings options:** | **Suggestion (no. of responses)** | **Council response** |
| | Reduce Council staff / management or salaries (30) | Council salaries are set based on duties and responsibilities. Staffing levels are reviewed frequently. |
| | Stop spending money on vanity projects (15) | The value of spend on any project can be subjective. What may be considered a vanity project to some, may be considered sound investment to others. |
| | Stop outsourcing services / review existing contracts (10) | The Council only uses contracts where it is unable to operate services itself. |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Turn off streetlights in residential roads between midnight and 5am | | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: Peter Walker | 14 January 2025 (Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Turn lights off in Council buildings out of hours (6) | This suggestion is noted. | |
| | Reduce mowing of roadside verges (5) | Grass cutting has been reduced in recent years. It is important to maintain cutting in some locations for highway safety. | |
| | Council should operate more efficiently (5) | The Council reviews its operations frequently, seeking ways to provide better services more efficiently. A recent example is the introduction of e-billing for Council Tax. | |
| **Suggestions for income generation:** | **Suggestion (no. of responses)** | **Council response** | |
| | Create new chargeable services / events (4) | This suggestion is noted. | |
| | Higher Council Tax increases (4) | Maximum Council Tax increases are set by national government. | |
| | Sell some assets (3) | The Council has been reviewing its assets in recent years, however due to central government funding rules, income from such sales cannot always be used to replace or bolster existing budgets. | |
| **Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:** | Switching off street lights overnight does have benefits, but also instils considerable fear – for increased crime against people and property. Officers have considered the feedback from the consultation and have proposed an alternative method of making savings in this area. The Council had already embarked on a programme of:<br>• Lights dimmed from switch on until 10pm<br>• Lights further dimmed from 10pm to 6am<br>• Illumination provided at 'switch on levels' from 6am to dawn.<br>This has so far only been applied to around half of the residential lighting. By completing this programme with resource now available, further savings can be made. This will result in a saving of approximately £40,000 for 2025/26. This will account for concerns raised in discussions with Thames Valley Police, and keep lighting levels in line with national standards.<br><br>A trial may be considered during the year for full switch-off during the early hours of the morning, but this would be in conjunction with Thames Valley Police and a full risk assessment. This may lead to additional savings if successful. | | |



**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

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**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Discontinue the Mobile Library Service**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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**Why we consulted?**

Councils across the country continue to face unprecedented financial pressures, West Berkshire Council is no exception. Post the COVID pandemic, Councils including West Berkshire have experienced a high inflation environment, resulting in increasing costs and rising demand on our social services supporting our most vulnerable residents.

In 2025/26, we need to find £12.1 million in savings or income generation. This figure assumes that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £10.4 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.2 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified nine proposals.

For more information, please visit https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget

**Approach**

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on Monday, 11 November 2024 with feedback requested by midnight on Monday, 23 December 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index page[i], which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hub[ii].

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 considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people). Information was shared with all mobile library users using posters, and hard copies of the survey were made available on the mobile library throughout the consultation period.
Information about the consultation information was included in the libraries monthly newsletter for both November and December 2024 reaching 19,431 library customers. There were posters to publicise the budget consultation in all libraries, on digital screens at Newbury library and the information was posted on social media channels.

A press release about the budget consultation information was issued on 11 November 2024, and the budget consultation was further publicised through resharing through social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and made them available to services to put up as required.

## Proposal Background

The Mobile Library service has been operating in West Berkshire for over 40 years. It currently travels to 76 locations, including public service stops, schools, nurseries, sheltered housing, a community café, and a hospital. The service provides access to 1,500 items of fiction, non-fiction, large print, spoken word CDs and a selection of children's books. Book reservations are provided as well as general information.

The frequency of Mobile Library visits is currently 6-weekly. Details of stops, dates and times can be found on the library webpages.

Use of the Mobile Library Service has been in decline over recent years. Until 2017/18, there were two Mobile Library vehicles, but following a Libraries Review it was decided to retire the larger vehicle. The smaller vehicle was retained, but the service has been subject to further decline.

Data shows that many residents who use the Mobile Library Service, also borrow books from the physical library buildings. Only 239 residents solely used the Mobile Library Service in 2023/24.

The 2024/25 budget for the Mobile Library and At Home Service is £86,880 and covers two full time posts, as well as vehicle costs. The Mobile Library costs approximately £42,000.

| Name of cost | Amount (£) |
|---|---|
| Saving on staffing: Mobile Driver Post - currently vacant | £33,020 |
| Saving on vehicle costs | £9,060 |
| **Total saving** | **£42,080** |

## Legislative and Statutory Requirements

The council has a statutory obligation to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

We have engaged with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), to inform them of the proposed change to the statutory library service provision in West Berkshire and to seek their views on our approach. DCMS stressed the importance of completing robust needs and equality impact assessments, including mitigations to inform the proposed changes and resulting decisions.

As part of their guidance DCMS reiterated the importance of mitigations and has encouraged the Council to review regularly the mitigations put in place to ensure that they remain relevant and that they continue to meet the needs of residents.

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Discontinue the Mobile Library Service**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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## Proposal Details

To discontinue the Mobile Library Service from 1 April 2025. The Mobile Driver post will be removed from the staff establishment, and this will reduce expenditure by £42,080 annually out of a total budget of £86,880 for the Mobile Library and At Home service

## Consultation Response

Number of Responses

In total,143 responses were received. Of the 143 consultation responses received, 37 residents are users of the mobile library service – see question 2 below for full breakdown. All responses were received through the online survey.

Summary of Main Points

Results show that most respondents to the consultation (59.29%), either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to discontinue the mobile library service. 32.86% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Whilst there is recognition that the mobile library service is outdated, expensive and used by a small and diminishing number of people, a small number of respondents argue that it still serves an important function in the community, particularly for vulnerable groups.

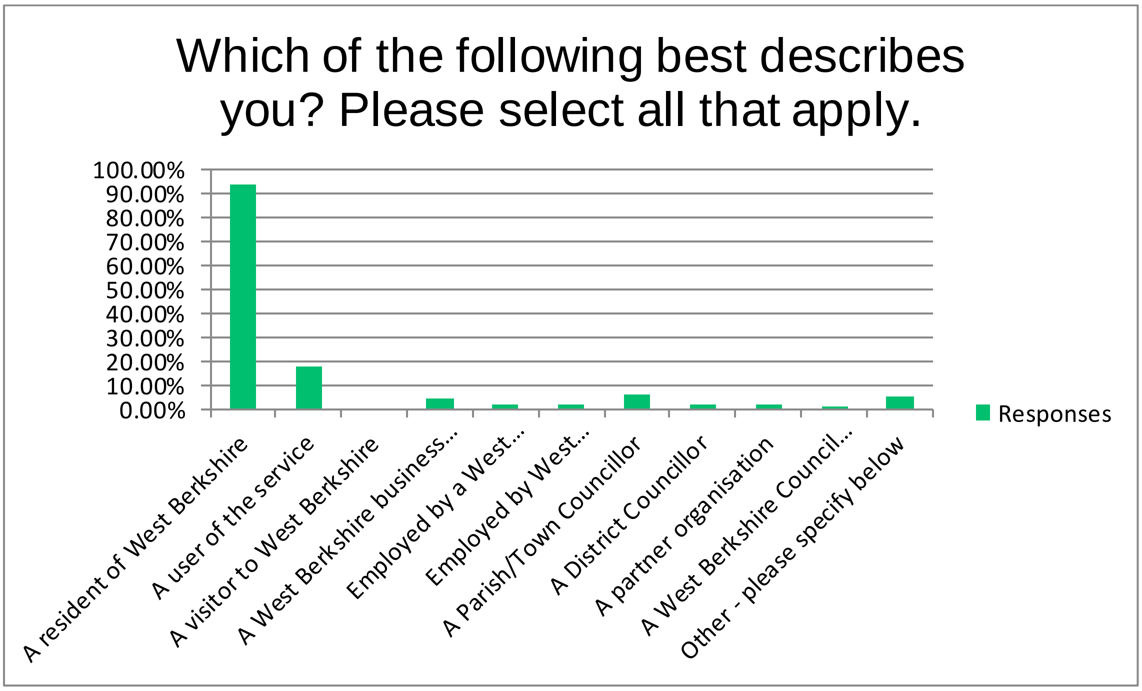
Concerns raised include social isolation, limited access to books, and difficulties with alternative services. Responses confirm that the suggested mitigations, such as promoting e-library resources, pop-up libraries, increased community outreach and delivering books via the At Home service, provide effective alternative provision if implemented.

Summary of Responses by Question

**1. Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.**

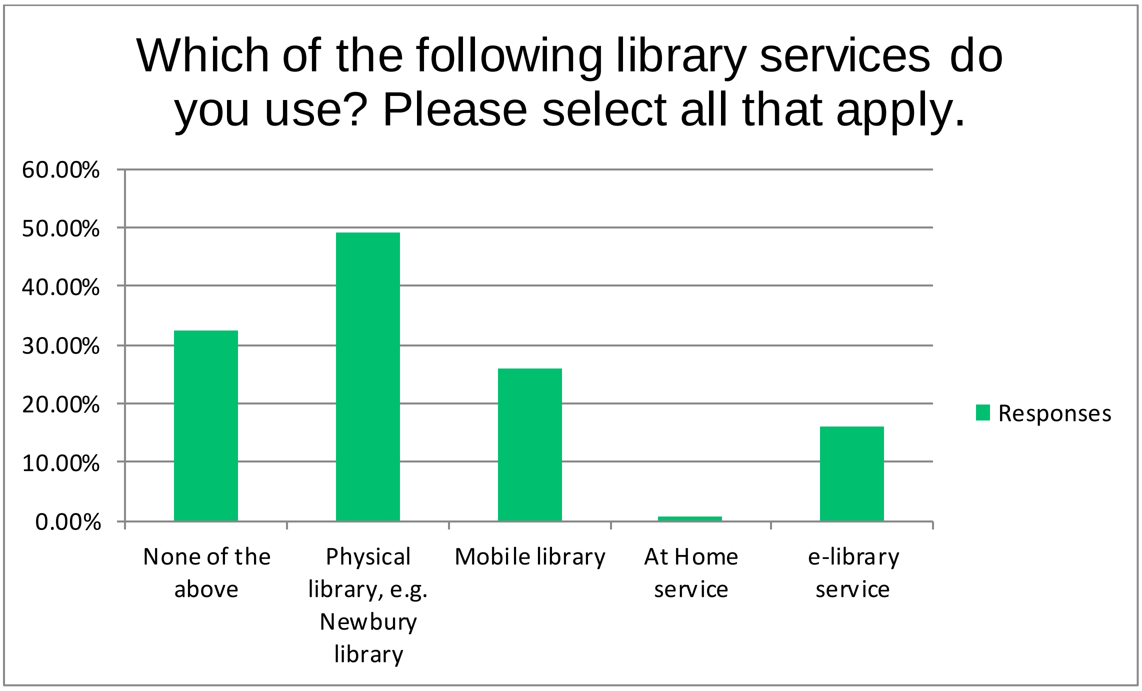
| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 134 | 93.71 |
| A user of the service | 25 | 17.48 |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 0 | 0 |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 6 | 4.2 |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 3 | 2.1 |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 3 | 2.1 |

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 9 | 6.29 |
| A District Councillor | 3 | 2.1 |
| A partner organisation | 3 | 2.1 |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 1 | 0.70 |
| Other | 8 | 5.59 |




**2. Which of the following library services do you use? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Physical library, e.g. Newbury library | 70 | 49.30 |
| Mobile library | 37 | 26.06 |
| At Home service | 1 | 0.70 |
| e-library service | 23 | 16.2 |
| None of the above | 46 | 32.39 |
| | **142** | |




It should be noted that out of 143 consultation responses received, only 37 residents are users of the mobile library.

**3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to discontinue the Mobile Library Service from 1 April 2025?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 53 | 37.86 |
| Agree | 30 | 21.43 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 11 | 7.86 |
| Disagree | 14 | 10 |
| Strongly Disagree | 32 | 22.86 |
| **Total** | **140** | **100%** |

Results show that 59.29% of respondents to the consultation either agree or strongly agree with the proposal to discontinue the mobile library service. 32.86% disagree or strongly disagree.

**Cost Efficiency**: Many respondents agreed that this service is not economically viable and is a luxury that the Council can no longer afford. The service is accepted to be high cost with a small and diminishing group of users, and that the proposals make financial sense.

Some respondents, however, argue that while it may seem like a financial saving of £42k, the overall cost to the community in terms of social isolation, mental health, and community cohesion could outweigh this saving.

**Alternative Solutions:** It was felt by many respondents that good and cost-effective alternatives had been proposed, and if these are implemented this will mitigate the impact of discontinuing the service. There was some concern about Town and Parish Councils being expected to cover the cost of pop-up libraries, and whether this is sustainable in the longer-term.

It was noted by some that these alternatives might not fully replace the community benefits of the mobile library, especially for elderly or isolated residents who may struggle with technology.

There was also a concern about the reliance on volunteer-led solutions.

**Environmental and Personal Costs**: Whilst accepting that the mobile library vehicle has a negative environmental impact, it was felt by some respondents that additional journeys made to library buildings or to resident's homes would have an equally negative impact increasing both personal costs (transport) and environmental impact (carbon footprint).

**Transport Issues:** The mobile library service is seen as improving the quality of life in rural areas, especially in those villages with no bus service.

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

**Impact of Proposal:**
88 responses received. From survey responses, key concerns were highlighted by respondents about the following groups in rural areas:

- **Current Mobile Library Service Users**: It is important to ensure that current service users are comfortable and confident in using the proposed library service provision alternatives.
- **Families:** Impact on families in rural areas without access to transport.
- **Elderly Residents:** Elderly residents may find it more challenging to access physical library services. There may be a greater impact on elderly residents who may have been affected by other government actions.
- **Concerns About Current at Home Service Criteria:** At Home service may not be accessible to everyone who currently uses the mobile library, especially those who do not meet specific criteria or cannot navigate the application process.

**5. If you think our proposed change might have a negative effect on you or other people, do you have any suggestions for how we could minimise it, should we proceed? If so, please provide details.**

**Increase Volunteer Involvement**
72 responses received.

- Simple volunteer recruitment process, free from unwieldy bureaucracy.
- Offer volunteer led library services at community cafes and village halls.
- Involve schools, community groups, and organisations like the WI.
- Publicise the need for volunteers by using (Facebook, community magazines, parish councils, ward councillors, schools, community groups, and cafes).
- Identify new areas for volunteer help.
- Propose a monthly home delivery service, using village halls, local pubs.

**Service Alternatives**

- Provide internet e-libraries in addition to physical libraries.
- Offer a monthly home delivery service or pop-up libraries.
- Organise pop-up library events in community centres, schools, or town halls.
- Set up a book subscription service/mail order, book sharing clubs, or community book hubs.

**Accessibility and Outreach**

- Ensure accessible services for those who cannot get to libraries/afford books.
- Proactively promote digital e-library and At Home services to mobile library users, making them more user-friendly and widely known.
- Expand outreach activities with schools/communities to ensure children and families in remote areas have access to books and library activities.

**Technological Solutions**

- Simplify access to e-library services, especially for the elderly.
- Provide training for e-library services and offer devices like Kindles to improve access.

**Financial and Operational Considerations**

- Reducing CEO/management salaries.
- Avoid investment in electric vehicles and purchase a second-hand vehicle.
- Explore crowdfunding for necessary expenses like a new vehicle.
- Consider a small subscription fee for book delivery services.
- Explore grants to cover costs.

**Social and Community Benefits**

- Emphasise the social benefits of the mobile library, which fosters community interaction and mental well-being.
- Maintain services to care homes, children's homes, and community settings.

**Long-term Solutions**

- Shuttle services/subsidised transport to help residents access libraries.
- Partner with local businesses to set up satellite book borrowing points or mini libraries.

**6. Are you aware of any existing settings, such as pre-schools or community cafes, which would benefit from a regular outreach visit from the library service? If so, please provide details.**

49 responses received.

**Specific Locations:**

We received 13 suggestions of community venues within West Berkshire which would benefit from a regular outreach visit from the library service. Suggested venues included churches, community cafes and pre-school settings.

**7. 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.**

52 responses received.

- **Collaborate with Other Councils:**
  - Join services with other councils to reduce operational costs.
- **Management and Staffing:**
  - Reduce the levels of management.
  - Employ fewer staff in admin areas to save on pension costs.
  - Review management salaries and consider reducing middle and upper management positions.
- **Technological and Operational Improvements:**
  - Integrate all council services under one IT system to improve efficiency and reduce costs.
  - Look at what other councils do both in the UK and abroad, especially in technology and linking services together.
  - Utilise automation and AI to streamline operations.
- **Service Adjustments:**
  - Reduce the frequency of mobile library visits or target rural areas with high elderly populations.
  - Introduce fee-paying activities in physical libraries to encourage better usage.
  - Consider charging a small fee for borrowing books.
- **Volunteers and Community Involvement:**
  - Use volunteers to help with various tasks, e.g. driving mobile library.
  - Publicise the need for volunteers through local volunteer centre and community platforms.
- **Income-Generating Activities:**
  - Create income-generating businesses within the council.
  - Consider crowdfunding for necessary expenses like a new vehicle.
  - Increase income through events such as author talks, craft fairs, book fairs, and themed days.
  - Utilise Shaw House for events like open-air cinema days/music events.
- **Cost-Saving Measures:**
  - Review contracts and ensure value for money by getting multiple quotations.
- **Community and Outreach:**
  - Repurpose library spaces for work-from-library (WFL) spaces and partner with local coffee shops to generate revenue.
  - Establish community book hubs or give-one-take-one areas, like refurbished phone boxes.
  - Set up a book subscription service or community book-sharing clubs.

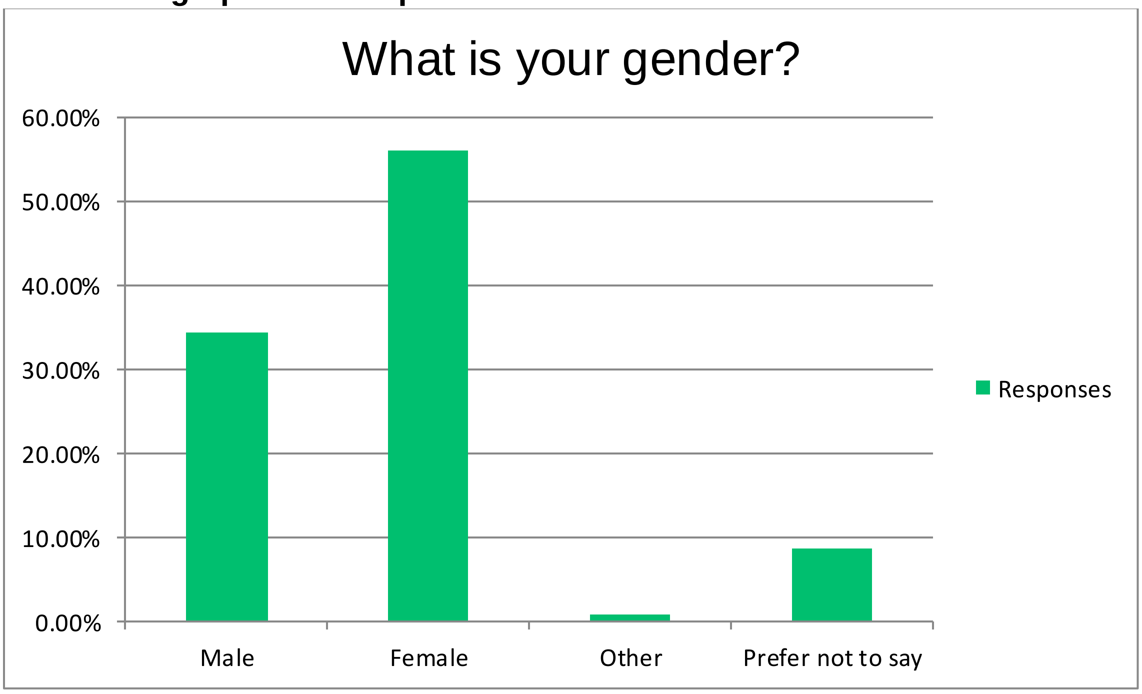
- **Publicity and Promotion:**
  - Increase publicity of the library services and engage with schools and community groups.
  - Follow the Wikipedia model and have periodic appeals targeted at library users.

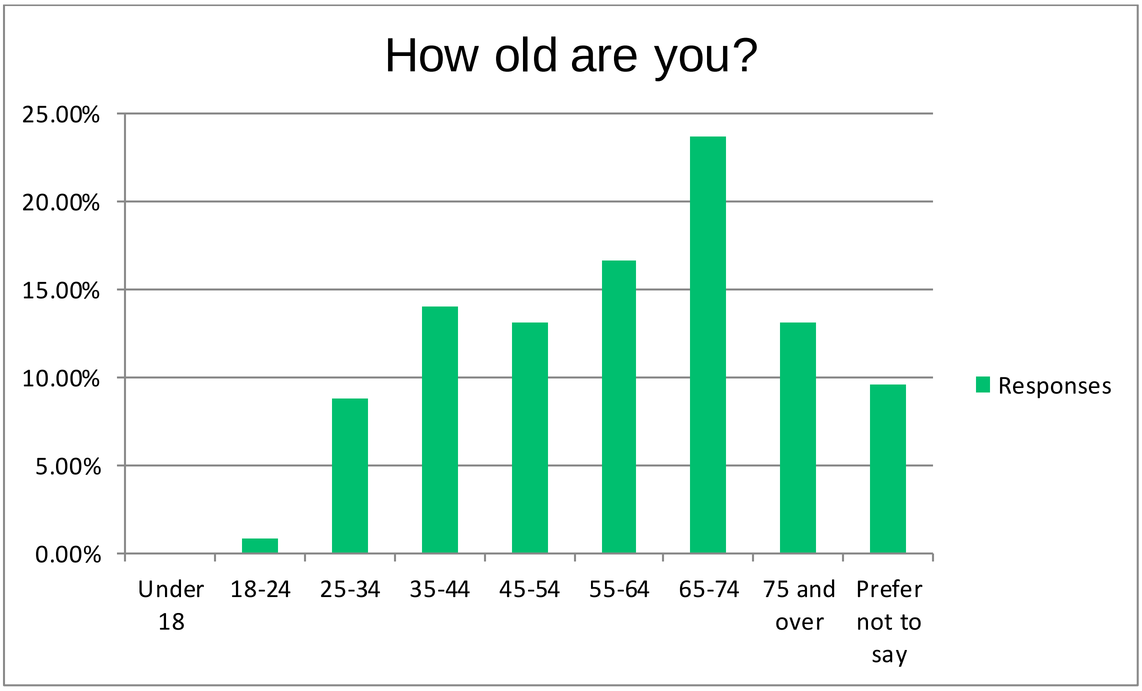
## 8. Any further comments?

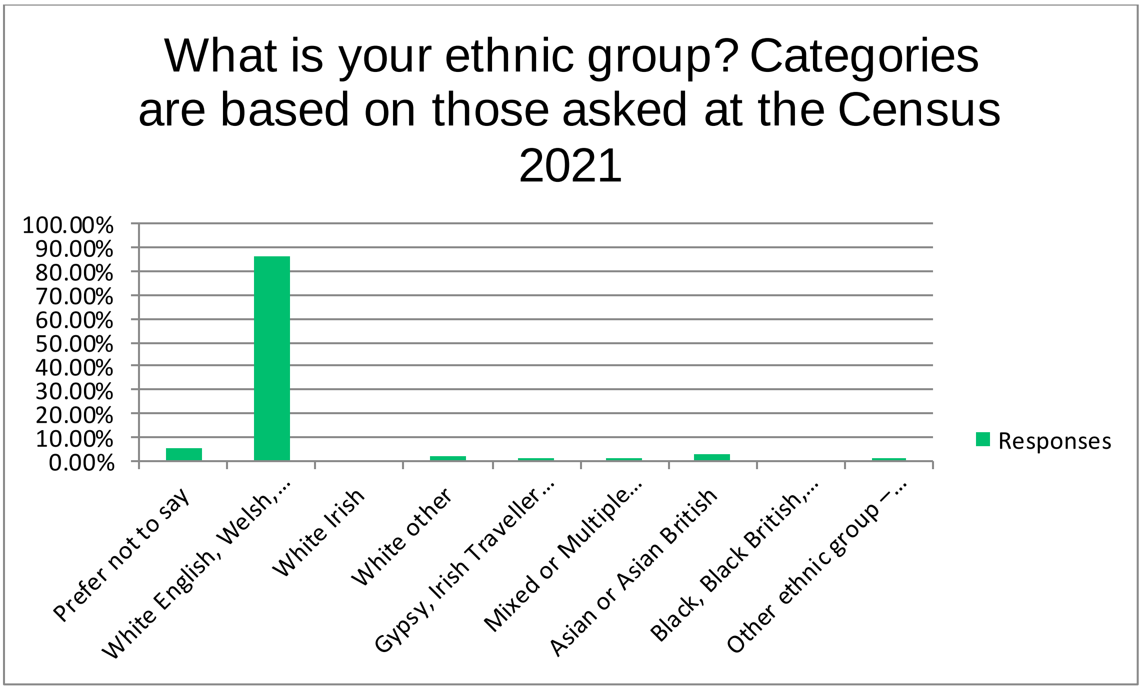
34 responses received

- Review council spending on non-essential projects.
- Ensure schools have funding and access to books.
- Reduce public bin collections where not needed.
- Stop charging for tip runs to dumps to reduce illegal dumping and associated cleanup costs.
- Turn off lights in buildings when not in use to save on energy costs.

## 9. Demographics of respondents






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

Felicity Harrison
Culture and Libraries Manager

Elizabeth Beverley
Libraries Manager
6 January 2025

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Discontinue the Mobile Library Service**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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***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.*

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[i] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget

[ii] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations

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# West Berkshire Council

# Equity Impact Assessment

January 2025

Contents

## Section 1: Summary details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Directorate and Service Area** | **Community Services/ Place Directorate** |
| **What is being assessed** (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | To discontinue the mobile library service from 1st April 2025. |
| **Is this a new or existing function or policy?** | Existing Service |
| **Summary of assessment** Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment). | To retire the mobile library vehicle, which is end of life, and replace it with a range of more effective service options for residents, particularly those living in rural areas. This proposal is supported by the community needs assessment which was undertaken by an independent 3rd party in 2022. |
| **Completed By** | Felicity Harrison/Elizabeth Beverley |
| **Authorised By** | |
| **Date of Assessment** | 21/10/2024 |

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

| | |
|---|---|
| **Context / Background**<br><br>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | The council is proposing to retire the mobile library vehicle, which is end of life, from 1st April 2025, and replace it with a range of more effective library service options for residents across the district.<br><br>The mobile library service has been operating in the West Berkshire area for over 40 years. It currently travels to 76 locations throughout the West Berkshire, including public service stops throughout the district, schools, nurseries, sheltered housing, a community café, and a hospital. The service provides access to 1,500 items of fiction, non-fiction, large print, spoken word CDs and a selection of children's books. Book reservations are provided as well as general information. The frequency of mobile library visits was reduced from 3 weekly to 6 weekly in July 2024. Details of stops, dates and times can be found on the library website. www.westberks.gov.uk/libraries<br><br>Use of the mobile library service has been in decline over the last few years. Up until 2017/18 there were two mobile library vehicles in West Berkshire, but one of the outcomes of the Libraries Review at that time was to retire the larger mobile library vehicle out of the fleet of two. The smaller vehicle was retained, but the service has been subject to further decline. Statistics for 2023/24 show that many residents who use the mobile library service, also borrow books from the physical library buildings and therefore would not be severely impacted by no longer having access to this service. Only 239 residents solely used the mobile library service in 2023/24.<br><br>The total budget for the mobile and At Home service is £86,880 for 2024/25 and covers two full time posts as well as vehicle costs. The proposal to discontinue the mobile library service will allow the Council to reduce expenditure by £42,080 annually.<br><br><table><tr><td>Saving on staffing: Mobile Driver Post – currently vacant</td><td>£33,020</td></tr><tr><td>Saving on vehicle costs</td><td>£9,060</td></tr><tr><td>**Total saving**</td><td>**£42,080**</td></tr></table> |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Proposals**<br><br>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action. | The council is proposing to discontinue the mobile library service from 1st April 2025 and replace it with a range of more effective library service options for residents particularly in rural areas.<br><br>This proposal to discontinue the mobile library service will allow the Council to reduce expenditure by £42,080 annually out of a total budget of £86,880 for the Mobile Library and At Home service.<br><br>The following proposals are being put forward to ensure that residents are not disadvantaged by the discontinuation of the mobile library service which currently operates by visiting a set route of 76 locations over a 6-week cycle.<br><br>• **Expansion of the library 'At Home' service**<br>Residents unable to visit static library buildings and therefore meeting the criteria for the library 'At Home' service, will be matched up with a DBS checked volunteer. The volunteer would then spend time getting to know the reading tastes of the person they had been linked up with to enable them to choose and deliver a selection of books to them in their own home on a regular basis every 3 weeks.<br><br>The delivery of this service will not be restricted to a timetable of set locations only and can be delivered anywhere in the West Berkshire district therefore increasing accessibility.<br><br>Customers with mobility issues can receive book deliveries the service in their own homes rather than having to attempt to access the mobile library vehicle.<br><br>The criteria for At Home visits will be reviewed in line with service developments, to increase accessibility. The new criteria will include a wider range of residents, e.g. families in rural areas with no access to transport.<br><br>• **Community outreach**<br>Visits to settings such as pre-schools, community cafes etc. to deliver library services will increase.<br><br>• **Pop-up libraries**<br>A selection of additional costed library service options for pop-up libraries will be put forward to town and parish councils for their consideration.<br><br>• **e-library provision** |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Residents will continue to have the option of borrowing a vast selection of books/magazines/newspapers through the e-library service, free of charge. Help in accessing these digital services can be provided by library staff and volunteers. |
| **Evidence / Intelligence**<br><br>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments. | Use of the mobile library service has been in decline over the last few years. Up until 2017/18 there were two mobile library vehicles in West Berkshire, but one of the outcomes of the Libraries Review at that time was to retire the larger mobile library vehicle out of the fleet of two. The smaller vehicle was retained, but the service has been subject to further decline. Statistics for 2023/24 show that many residents who use the mobile library service, also borrow books from the physical library buildings and therefore would not be severely impacted by no longer having access to this service. Only 239 residents solely used the mobile library service in 2023/24. |
| **Alternatives considered / rejected**<br><br>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option. | The current mobile library vehicle, owned by WBC, is 18 years old. Maintenance costs are increasing year on year to keep this ageing diesel vehicle on the road.<br><br>If this service were to continue in its current form, then a new vehicle would be required. As part of reviewing this service, the council has investigated the cost of replacing the vehicle with a like for like electric version - this would cost in the region of £200k. In view of the significant investment required, combined with the diminishing usage of the service, this option has been discounted. |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

| Protected Characteristic | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of Impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | A child or elderly person may find it more difficult to access a physical library service if their closest open library is further away.<br>The overall strategy seeks to ensure the At Home Library Service, increased outreach provision, and the digital e-library offer with robust digital support to combat digital exclusion has a positive impact on children and elderly people, ensuring that they will not be disadvantaged by this change in service. | 1. Elderly residents will be able to receive books delivered to their own homes through the library At Home service.<br>2. Extra digital support will be made available to elderly residents to enable them to access e-library resources if they wish to.<br>3. Library provision increased through collaboration with town and parish councils to provide pop-up libraries.<br>4. Library provision increased through community outreach. | Elizabeth Beverley<br>Libraries Manger | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Disability** | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | The expanded At Home service, will be more supportive for those residents who cannot access static library buildings because of their disability.<br><br>It will not be restricted to a timetable of set locations and can be delivered anywhere in the West Berkshire district therefore increasing accessibility for residents. The At Home service will also improve access for those residents who may have struggled to access the mobile library vehicle, ensuring that they will not be disadvantaged by this change in service. | 1. Expansion of the library At Home service, and the ability to reach residents with disabilities all over the district rather than being limited to a set route/timetable.<br>2. Extra digital support will be made available to residents with disabilities, to enable them to access e-library resources if they wish to. | Elizabeth Beverley<br><br>Libraries Manger | |
| **Gender Reassignment** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Marriage & Civil Partnership** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pregnancy & Maternity** | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | A pregnant woman or new mother may find it more difficult to access library services if their closest open library is further away. The overall strategy seeks to ensure the At Home library service, increased outreach provision, and the digital e-library offer with robust digital support to combat digital exclusion ensures that this group of residents will not be disadvantaged. | 1. Pregnant women will be eligible to receive books delivered to their own homes through the library At Home service.<br>2. Extra digital support will also be made available to this group, to enable them to access e-library resources if they wish to.<br>3. Increased community outreach work.<br>4. Library provision increased through collaboration with town and parish councils to provide pop-up libraries. | Elizabeth Beverley<br><br>Libraries Manger | |
| **Race** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Sex** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Sexual Orientation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Religion or Belief** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural communities** | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | The mobile library service which visited rural settings throughout the district will cease on 31st March 2025. It will be replaced by alternative options for library provision to ensure that residents are not disadvantaged by this change. | 1. Expansion of the library At Home service, and the ability to reach residents all over the district rather than being limited to a set route/timetable.<br>2. Increasing library service community outreach visits to settings such as pre-schools and community cafes.<br>3. Working with town and parish councils to promote a costed pop-up library option in those areas of the district without library provision in their locality.<br>4. Promoting the e-library offer by providing support for residents to access these services and | Elizabeth Beverley<br><br>Libraries Manger | |

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| **Additional community impacts** | **No Impact** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **Description of impact** | **Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts** | **Action owner** (*Job Title, Organisation) | **Timescale and monitoring arrangements** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | combat digital exclusion. | | |
| **Areas of deprivation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Displaced communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Care experienced people** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **The Armed Forces Community** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 4: Review

**Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Review Date** | **N/A – No adverse impacts identified** |
| **Person Responsible for Review** | |
| **Authorised By** | |

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Discontinue the Mobile Library Service | | Service Director: April Peberdy<br>Author: Felicity Harrison/Elizabeth Beverley | | 14 January 2025<br>(Corporate Board) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Proposal:** | To discontinue the Mobile Library Service from 1 April 2025.<br><br>We have engaged with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to inform them of the proposed change to the statutory library service provision in West Berkshire and to seek their views on our approach. DCMS stressed the importance of completing robust needs and equality impact assessments, including mitigations to inform the proposed changes and resulting decisions.<br><br>As part of their guidance DCMS reiterated the importance of mitigations and has encouraged the Council to review regularly the mitigations put in place to ensure that they remain relevant and that they continue to meet the needs of residents. | | | | |
| **Total budget 2024/25:** | £86,880 | **Initial proposed saving 2025/26:** | £42,080 | **Recommended saving 2025/26:** | £42,080 |
| **No. of responses:** | In total, 143 responses were received. | | | | |

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 134 | 93.71 |
| A user of the service | 25 | 17.48 |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 0 | 0 |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 6 | 4.2 |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 3 | 2.1 |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 3 | 2.1 |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 9 | 6.29 |
| A District Councillor | 3 | 2.1 |
| A partner organisation | 3 | 2.1 |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 1 | 0.70 |
| Other | 8 | 5.59 |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

**Overview of Responses and Recommendations**

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Discontinue the Mobile Library Service | Service Director: April Peberdy<br>Author: Felicity Harrison/Elizabeth Beverley | 14 January 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|

The breakdown of responses is as follows:

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Physical library, e.g. Newbury library | 70 | 49.30 |
| Mobile library | 37 | 26.06 |
| At Home service | 1 | 0.70 |
| e-library service | 23 | 16.2 |
| None of the above | 46 | 32.39 |
| ***All responses were received through the online survey*** | **142** | |

(As respondents may use more than one service point, the percentage total does not add up to 100%)

**Key issues raised:**

*(Taken from CSR – Summary of Main Points)*

Results show that the majority of the 143 respondents to the consultation (59.29%), either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to discontinue the mobile library service. 32.86% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Whilst there is recognition that the mobile library service is outdated, expensive and used by a small and diminishing number of people, a small number of respondents argue that it still serves an important function in the community, particularly for vulnerable groups.

Concerns raised include social isolation, limited access to books, and difficulties with alternative services. Responses confirm that the suggested mitigations, such as promoting e-library resources, pop-up libraries, increased community outreach and delivering books via the At Home service, should provide effective alternative provision if implemented. However, these solutions come with their own set of challenges, such as ensuring adequate volunteer support and access to technology.

Ensuring that these alternatives are clearly communicated, accessible and reliable will be key to minimising the impact on current users.

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Budget Proposals 2025/26: Discontinue the Mobile Library Service</th><th>Service Director: April Peberdy<br>Author: Felicity Harrison/Elizabeth Beverley</th><th>14 January 2025<br>(Corporate Board)</th></tr>
<tr><td>Equality issues:</td><td colspan="3">No issues were raised during the consultation that weren’t already included in the Equity Impact Assessment, but more detail has been included about how the eligibility criteria for residents to access the At Home library service will be expanded to include families in rural areas without access to transport.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">Suggestions for minimising any negative effects of the proposed change:</td><td>Suggestion</td><td colspan="2">Council response</td></tr>
<tr><td>Increase volunteer involvement</td><td colspan="2">A Volunteers Officer is employed to actively recruit volunteers and identify new areas where volunteers can help as well as working with new community partners to help increase publicity.</td></tr>
<tr><td>e-Library provision, promotion and digital help sessions.<br>Loan of devices.</td><td colspan="2">Free e-library provision is already in place with 258,033 e-library loans in 2023/24. The Council is due to go out to tender for e-library services imminently so that e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines and e-newspapers will all be supplied by just one provider from April 2025. This will simplify the e-library offer for residents, and a fresh marketing campaign will commence at the same time as the new contract. e-Library help sessions will be available for those residents who may need digital assistance to get started.<br>WBC Libraries will also be implementing a tablet loaning system.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Provide Home library deliveries to more residents.</td><td colspan="2">At Home service is already in place and will be expanded if the demand is there from the community. The consultation responses confirmed that we need to review the criteria for At Home visits in line with service developments, to increase accessibility. The new criteria will include a wider range of residents, e.g. families in rural areas with no access to transport.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pop-up libraries</td><td colspan="2">The Council is working with town and parish councils to determine if they would like to pursue this as an investment option. A trial pop-up library at Compton Village Hall is in place until the end of March 2025.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Provide community book hubs</td><td colspan="2">A community book-shelf option is something that is being considered for venues in smaller parishes where there is no space for a pop-up library.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expansion of outreach activities with schools/communities and other community settings.</td><td colspan="2">13 suggestions of community venues within West Berkshire which would benefit from a regular outreach visit from the library service were received, and as a result of the public consultation staff will follow up on all of these. Suggested venues included churches, community cafes and pre-school settings.</td></tr>
</table>

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Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Discontinue the Mobile Library Service | | Service Director: April Peberdy<br>Author: Felicity Harrison/Elizabeth Beverley | 14 January 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Shuttle bus services/subsidised transport to help residents access libraries. | The associated cost with providing this service would be financially unviable. Other services, such as e-library resources, pop-up libraries, increased community outreach and delivering books via the At Home service, should provide a more cost-effective approach. | |
| | Partner with local businesses to set up satellite book borrowing points. | This is another option to consider as part of the pop-up library initiative. | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| **Suggestions for other savings options:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** | |
| | Reducing CEO/senior management salaries. | This suggestion has been noted. | |
| | Purchase a second-hand vehicle rather than an expensive new electric one. | For a service that is used by such a small number of residents, this would not be financially viable. It would also not be compliant with the Council's *Environment Strategy 2020-2030* which outlines the steps we are taking to reach the net zero carbon target for the district. | |
| | Join with other Councils to reduce operational costs. | WBC is already working with several other Councils to save money through providing shared services, e.g. Shared library management software system – a joint project with 13 other authorities. | |
| | Look at what other Councils do in the UK and abroad. | The Council is continually reviewing best practice examples from other authorities and acting on this where appropriate. | |
| | Utilise automation and AI to streamline operations. | West Berkshire libraries all have self-service kiosks installed to deal with all routine customer transactions, and the Council is looking into opportunities for developing the use of AI. | |
| | Review contracts and ensure value for money by getting multiple quotations. | The Council's contract rules ensure that we are compliant in this way and get best value for money. | |
| | Turn off the lights in Council buildings. | This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration. | |
| | Stop charging for tip runs to reduce fly tipping. | This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration. | |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| **Budget Proposals 2025/26: Discontinue the Mobile Library Service** | **Service Director: April Peberdy**<br>**Author: Felicity Harrison/Elizabeth Beverley** | **14 January 2025**<br>**(Corporate Board)** |
|---|---|---|
| **Suggestions for income generation:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** |
| | Consider a small subscription fee for book delivery services. | This could be an option to consider. |
| | Crowd Funding | With such a small number of residents using the mobile library service, it would not be justifiable to initiate a crowd funding campaign in this instance, however this income generating model is something we are considering for other areas. |
| | Explore grants to cover costs | With such a small and diminishing number of residents using the service, it would not be justifiable to apply for grant funding. |
| | Repurpose library spaces | This is being considered as part of the Council's accommodation review. |
| | Introduction of a fee for borrowing books. | The Council has a statutory duty under the *Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964* 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons', and in providing this service councils must lend books and other printed material free of charge to those who live, work or study in the area. |
| | Utilise Shaw House for events like open-air cinema and community events. | Shaw House has a full programme of community events including that can be viewed here: [West Berkshire Heritage Events] |
| | Increase income generating events in libraries. | This is being implemented across all West Berkshire libraries, one example being a programme of monthly author talks at Newbury Library charged at £5 per person. |
| **Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:** | Of the 143 consultation responses received, only 37 residents are current users of the mobile library service, but it must be noted that they may be users of other library service points as well as the mobile library. (In 2023/24 there were 239 residents who only used the mobile library).<br>59.29% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to discontinue this service, and there was a clear recognition amongst this group that it is a high-cost service for a small and diminishing group of users and is no longer financially viable. Several alternative forms of library provision have been proposed, and responses confirm that the suggested mitigations, such as promoting e-library resources, pop-up libraries, increased community outreach and delivering books via the At Home service, should provide effective alternative provision. | |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Discontinue the Mobile Library Service | | Service Director: April Peberdy<br>Author: Felicity Harrison/Elizabeth Beverley | 14 January 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Issues raised by the 32.86% that disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal included social isolation, limited access to books, and difficulties with alternative services. Key concerns were highlighted by respondents about the following vulnerable groups in rural areas:<br>o Current mobile library service users who may not meet the current criteria for the At Home library service.<br>o Families without access to transport.<br>o Elderly residents who may find it more challenging to access physical library services and may have been affected by other government actions.<br>All the above issues have been addressed in the Equity Impact Assessment.<br><br>It must be noted however, that the proposed solutions come with their own set of challenges, such as ensuring adequate volunteer support and access to technology. Ensuring that these alternatives are clearly communicated, accessible and reliable will be key to minimising the impact on current service users. There was also a real concern amongst respondents that the alternative solutions may not be fully implemented. Given that the mobile library service forms part of our statutory library service provision, we must be mindful of the commitment we have made in relation to these mitigations.<br><br>**In view of this response to the consultation, the recommendation is to proceed with the discontinuation of this service from the 1 April 2025.** | | |



**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Reduce the number of winter gritting routes**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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**Why we consulted?**

Councils across the country continue to face unprecedented financial pressures, West Berkshire Council is no exception. Post the COVID pandemic, Councils including West Berkshire have experienced a high inflation environment, resulting in increasing costs and rising demand on our social services supporting our most vulnerable residents.

In 2025/26, we need to find £12.1 million in savings or income generation. This figure assumes that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £10.4 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.2 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified nine proposals.

For more information, please visit https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget

**Approach**

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on Monday, 11 November 2024 with feedback requested by midnight on Monday, 23 December 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index page[i], which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hub[ii].

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 considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people).

Finally, we issued a press release on 11 November 2024, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and made them available to Services to put up as required.

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Reduce the number of winter gritting routes**

**Consultation Summary Report**

## Proposal Background

West Berkshire Council, as the highway authority, is responsible for looking after the district's 1,323km of publicly maintainable surfaced roads during the winter period, which runs from late October to early April each year. Our winter service is delivered by the Council's Term Maintenance Contractor, as part of our wider highway maintenance service.

The Council is not responsible for maintaining motorways and some major A-roads (historically known as trunk roads), which are maintained by National Highways. We are also not responsible for maintaining 'unadopted' private roads, as this responsibility is held by the owners of properties which front onto these roads. As such, these parts of the road network are not included in this consultation.

## Legislative and Statutory Requirements

By law, highway authorities must do all that is reasonably practicable to keep the publicly maintained highway free of snow and ice. It is recognised nationally that it is not reasonable to grit every single road. In West Berkshire, we prioritise roads for treatment so that only the highest priority routes routinely receive salting treatments or are ploughed during snow conditions. These are known as our Primary routes, and they are routinely treated throughout the winter season in advance of freezing conditions. They may also be treated, if necessary, continuously during a severe weather event.

Currently, daily weather forecasts for West Berkshire, from the A4 Halfway weather station, are used to decide if the routes should be treated, as well as the amount of salt to be spread. Treatment is normally carried out in advance of forecasted freezing conditions to achieve the most effective results. This is referred to as precautionary treatment. We also carry out reactive salting during prolonged freezing conditions.

## Proposal Details

To reduce the number of winter gritting routes by revising the criteria used to determine which roads should be treated as part of our Primary Route Network, to align with current national guidance

The expected saving for 2025/26 would be approximately £40,000.

## Consultation Response

<u>Number of Responses</u>

In total, 161 responses were received.

We received no petitions.

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Reduce the number of winter gritting routes**

**Consultation Summary Report**

Summary of Main Points

Overall opinion of this proposal was negative, with many citing the likelihood of increased accidents; and increase in social isolation, particularly in rural areas and amongst the most vulnerable. A few respondents suggested that people would naturally adapt and drive more carefully if their roads were not gritted.

There were requests for additional salt bins where gritting will be reduced, and more specific information on where and when gritting will take place. There were no significant alternative proposals raised.

Summary of Responses by Question

1. **Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 148 | 91.93% |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 0 | 0.00% |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 4 | 2.48% |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 4 | 2.48% |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 14 | 8.70% |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 9 | 5.59% |
| A District Councillor | 1 | 0.62% |
| A partner organisation | 4 | 2.48% |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 0 | 0.00% |
| Other – Parish Council, Hungerford Town Council | 2 | 1.24% |

2. **To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to reduce the number of winter gritting routes by revising the criteria used to determine which roads should be treated as part of our Primary Route Network, to align with current national guidance?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 17 | 11.49% |
| Agree | 19 | 12.84% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 13 | 8.78% |
| Disagree | 37 | 25.00% |
| Strongly Disagree | 62 | 41.89% |
| **Total** | **148** | **100%** |

Most of the responses at this stage highlighted the negative impacts, in particular the potential for more accidents, and more isolation (especially in rural areas, and for those largely housebound).

There were a number of comments expressing support, including the fact that there is an environment benefit of using less grit.

Others noted that more gritting is needed, that more information is required on specific changes, but also that people will adapt, and winter tyres are available.

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

97 responses received. As above, isolation and accidents were the main areas highlighted. It was also noted that it would have impacts on the elderly and the disabled, and those that rely on the use of their car.

**4. If you think our proposed change might have a negative effect on you or other people, do you have any suggestions for how we could minimise it, should we proceed? If so, please provide details.**

77 responses received. No particular issue received a strong reaction. It was suggested that rural roads should not be impacted, additional salt bins should be provided where road gritting is reduced, and better information of the actual impacts should be provided, and how to mitigate them (e.g. winter tyres).

**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.**

55 responses received. There was no consistent opinion amongst respondents. In relation to winter gritting suggestions included asking local businesses to contribute to costs, and using volunteers, those on community service, or the unemployed to spread grit.

Across the wider Council, the most popular responses were to reduce senior officer salaries or to stop spending money on vanity projects, but neither of these were mentioned more than a handful of times.

**6. Any further comments?**

29 responses received. No new arguments or ideas were added at this stage.

## 7. Demographics of respondents

| Gender | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 48 | 37.50% |
| Female | 62 | 48.44% |
| Other | 0 | 0.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 18 | 14.06% |

| Disability, long-term illness, or health-condition | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 17 | 17.00% |
| No | 63 | 63.00% |
| Prefer not to say | 20 | 20.00% |

| Age | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Under 18 | 0 | 0.00% |
| 18-24 | 1 | 0.78% |
| 25-34 | 6 | 4.69% |
| 35-44 | 11 | 8.59% |
| 45-54 | 20 | 15.63% |
| 55-64 | 39 | 30.47% |
| 65-74 | 23 | 17.97% |
| 75 and over | 5 | 3.91% |
| Prefer not to say | 23 | 17.97% |

| Ethnic group | Responses | |
|---|---|---|
| Prefer not to say | 14 | 14.00% |
| White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British | 83 | 83.00% |
| White Irish | 0 | 0.00% |
| White other | 1 | 1.00% |
| Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma | 0 | 0.00% |
| Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups | 1 | 1.00% |
| Asian or Asian British | 0 | 0.00% |
| Black, Black British, Caribbean or African | 0 | 0.00% |
| Other ethnic group – "British" | 1 | 1.00% |

| Post Code | Responses | | Post Code | Responses |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| RG7 | 17 | | RG19 | 17 |
| RG8 | 4 | | RG20 | 11 |
| RG14 | 23 | | RG30 | 1 |
| RG17 | 9 | | RG31 | 34 |
| RG18 | 20 | | SN4 | 1 |

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

Peter Walker
Service Lead – Highways & Transport
Environment Department
6 January 2025

***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.*

[i] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget
[ii] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations

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# West Berkshire Council

# Equity Impact Assessment

January 2025

Contents

## Section 1: Summary details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Directorate and Service Area** | Place/Environment |
| **What is being assessed** (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | Function |
| **Is this a new or existing function or policy?** | Existing |
| **Summary of assessment**<br><br>Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?<br><br>(following completion of the assessment). | Reduce the number of winter gritting routes |
| **Completed By** | Andrew Reynolds |
| **Authorised By** | |
| **Date of Assessment** | 17 October 2024 |

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

| | |
|---|---|
| **Context / Background**<br><br>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | West Berkshire Council, as the highway authority, is responsible for looking after the district's 1,323 km of publicly maintainable surfaced roads during the winter period, which runs from late October to early April each year. Our winter service is delivered by the Council's Term maintenance Contractor, as part of our wider highway maintenance service.<br><br>By law, Section 41 (1A) of the Highways Act 1980, which was modified on 31 October 2003, by Section 111 of the Railways and Transport Act 2003, highway authorities must do all that is reasonably practicable to keep the publicly maintained highway free of snow and ice. It is recognised nationally that it is not reasonable to grit every single road. |
| **Proposals**<br><br>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action. | Reduce the spend on the Council's winter service each year by £40,000.00.<br><br>Review and revise the criteria that we use to determine which roads we should treat to align with current national guidance.<br><br>Treatment networks would be updated to treat all routes that meet the revised criteria going forward. Overall, we expect the size of the treated network to reduce. |
| **Evidence / Intelligence**<br><br>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that | Reviewing the criteria used to determine which roads would be treated would ensure decisions are aligned to current national guidance.<br><br>The national guidance encourages local authorities to use local knowledge and evidence to define its levels of winter service through an approach which aims to minimise risk. |

| | |
|---|---|
| supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments. | Environmental benefits from a reduction in salt usage, vehicle milage and fuel usage. |
| **Alternatives considered / rejected**<br><br>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option. | No other options to reduce expenditure in this area have been identified. |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

| Protected Characteristic | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of Impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |
| Disability | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |
| Gender Reassignment | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |
| Marriage & Civil Partnership | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |
| Pregnancy & Maternity | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |
| Race | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |
| Sex | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |
| Sexual Orientation | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |
| Religion or Belief | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |
| **Areas of deprivation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |
| **Displaced communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |
| **Care experienced people** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |
| **The Armed Forces Community** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No effect anticipated | | | |

## Section 4: Review

**Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Review Date** | **n/a – no potential negative impacts identified.** |
| **Person Responsible for Review** | **n/a** |
| **Authorised By** | |

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## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Reduce the number of winter gritting routes | | | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: Peter Walker | | 14 January 2025 (Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Proposal:** | To reduce the number of winter gritting routes by revising the criteria used to determine which roads should be treated as part of our Primary Route Network, to align with current national guidance | | | | |
| **Total budget 2024/25:** | £559,040 | **Initial proposed saving 2025/26:** | £40,000 | **Recommended saving 2025/26:** | £40,000 |
| **No. of responses:** | In total, 161 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows: | | | | |

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 148 | 91.93% |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 0 | 0.00% |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 4 | 2.48% |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 4 | 2.48% |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 14 | 8.70% |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 9 | 5.59% |
| A District Councillor | 1 | 0.62% |
| A partner organisation | 4 | 2.48% |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 0 | 0.00% |
| Other – Parish Council, Hungerford Town Council | 2 | 1.24% |

We received no petitions.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Key issues raised:** | Overall opinion of this proposal was negative, with many citing the likelihood of increased accidents; and increase in social isolation, particularly in rural areas and amongst the most vulnerable. A few respondents suggested that people would naturally adapt and drive more carefully if their roads were not gritted. |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

**Overview of Responses and Recommendations**

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Reduce the number of winter gritting routes | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: Peter Walker | 14 January 2025 (Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|
| | There were requests for additional salt bins where gritting will be reduced, and more specific information on where and when gritting will take place. There were no significant alternative proposals raised. | |
| **Equality issues:** | No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the Equity Impact Assessment. | |
| **Suggestions for minimising any negative effects of the proposed change:** | **Suggestion (no. of responses)** | **Council response** |
| | Provide more information on actual routes affected, when gritting with take place, and promote winter tyres (8) | The Council's website (Road gritting and snow clearance - West Berkshire Council) provides information on winter gritting and safe driving. In times of severe weather, the Council will disseminate messages using social media. |
| | Provide additional salt bins (6) | Salt bins are primarily the responsibility of the Town and Parish Councils. |
| | Do not impact rural roads (5) | If this proposal is progressed with, gritting will be in accordance with national guidance. It is not yet possible to determine which roads may be impacted. |
| | Use better forecasting of when to grit (5) | The Council are using technology that should improve forecasting in future years. |
| | Promote use of winter tyres (2) | Safe driving is promoted on the Council's website (see above). |
| **Suggestions for other savings options:** | **Suggestion (no. of responses)** | **Council response** |
| | Reduce senior officer salaries (5) | Council salaries are set based on duties and responsibilities. |
| | Stop spending money on vanity projects (5) | The value of spend on any project can be subjective. What may be considered a vanity project to some, may be considered sound investment to others. |
| | Cut out spend on diversity and inclusion courses (2) | The Council focusses training in areas considered to be the most important and is subject to regular scrutiny. |
| **Suggestions for income generation:** | **Suggestion (no. of responses)** | **Council response** |
| | Ask businesses to contribute (2) | Businesses already contribute to the environmental and economic prosperity of West Berkshire in a number of ways. |
| | Higher Council Tax increases (2) | Maximum Council Tax increases are set by national government. |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

**Overview of Responses and Recommendations**

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Reduce the number of winter gritting routes | | Service Director: Jon Winstanley<br>Author: Peter Walker | 14 January 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:** | The Council currently grit more than most neighbouring local authorities, for example 16% more of the primary network than Wiltshire, 6% more than Hampshire, and 4% more than Wokingham. The proposal is to align winter gritting with national guidance which will reduce coverage by removing a vehicle from the winter gritting programme. As less than 100 people have responded against, the officer recommendation is to proceed with this proposal. | | |



**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

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**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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**Why we consulted?**

Councils across the country continue to face unprecedented financial pressures, West Berkshire Council is no exception. Post the COVID pandemic, Councils including West Berkshire have experienced a high inflation environment, resulting in increasing costs and rising demand on our social services supporting our most vulnerable residents.

In 2025/26, we need to find £12.1 million in savings or income generation. This figure assumes that Council Tax increases by 4.99% overall in line with previous government referendum limits. We have identified £10.4 million worth of savings and income generation, of which approximately £1.2 million comes from proposals that require public consultation.

Through extensive internal discussions and meetings with our service providers, we've identified nine proposals.

For more information, please visit [https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget](https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget)

**Approach**

Prior to the consultation commencing on the proposed savings, the Portfolio Holder discussed the proposal to remove Downlands Sport Centre from the Leisure contract with the Headteacher of The Downs School. The Sport and Leisure Manager and Service Director also met with Everyone Active contract managers to discuss the proposal and ensure that the staff working at the facility where informed ahead of the public consultation. It was agreed that consultation with the parish councils would be through the formal consultation exercise.

We published all the public facing proposals on our website on Monday, 11 November 2024 with feedback requested by midnight on Monday, 23 December 2024.

Respondents were directed to a central index page[i], which outlined the overall background to the exercise, and provided links to each of the individual proposals on our Consultation and Engagement Hub[ii].

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 considered. Feedback was then invited through an online survey, and hard copies of the proposal documents and surveys were made available on request.

As well as publishing the consultations on our website, we also emailed members of the West Berkshire Community Panel (around 2,500 people). The consultation was advertised in all the leisure centres via posters with a QR code to complete the survey.

Finally, we issued a press release on 11 November 2024, and further publicised our consultations through our social media accounts and residents' e-newsletters. We also placed posters in our main offices and made them available to Services to put up as required.

## Proposal Background

The Downland Sports Centre (the Centre) is one of seven facilities within the Leisure Management Contract between West Berkshire Council and leisure operator, Everyone Active (EA).

The Centre is geographically remote, with a relatively limited range of activities on offer. The facility is shared with The Downs School and therefore public access is restricted during term-time, and access to the Sports Hall is further restricted during exam periods.

The Centre is currently open to the public as follows:

<u>Term time:</u>

Monday to Thursday - 18:00 to 22:00
Fridays and Weekends - Currently available for Private Hire

<u>Non-term time:</u>

Monday to Thursday - 8:00 to 22:00
Fridays and Weekends - Currently available for Private Hire

For these reasons, public use of the Centre is relatively low. From July 2023 to June 2024, attendance at the Centre amounted to 4,488 visits. This is approximately 0.5% of the total attendance (851,154) across the seven sports and leisure centres in West Berkshire.

The Centre employs five part-time members of staff. There is also one casual member of staff which means they work on an "as-needed" basis.

Demographically, the area of the Ridgeway, in which the Centre is situated, is one of West Berkshire's least deprived areas, although it does face a higher prevalence of poor health conditions including obesity and hypertension.

## Legislative and Statutory Requirements

Not applicable

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract**

**Consultation Summary Report**

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## Proposal Details

To remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract, which means that Everyone Active would no longer be operating the facility for community use.

If the Centre was removed from the contract, a net revenue saving of approximately £30,000 per annum could be realised. If it remained in the Leisure Management Contract, then it is likely that additional capital investment for community use facilities would be required.

## Consultation Response

<u>Number of Responses</u>

In total, 207 responses were received. We also received two direct email responses from:

- Compton Archery club
- Compton Parish Council

We received no petitions.

<u>Summary of Main Points</u>

Of the 190 responses received for the question, nearly two-thirds (65%) disagreed with the proposal to withdraw Downlands from the Leisure Contract with Everyone Active; 57% (108 respondents) strongly disagreed and a further 8% (16 respondents) disagreed.

The reasons stated included that the facility was believed to be vital to the rural community and the activities run from the Centre supported the physical health and wellbeing of residents.

There was concern that, due to limited public transport and the time taken to travel to alternative sites, children and young people and older adults, without independent access to personal transport, might be disproportionately impacted.

There was specific mention that the holiday camps supported local working parents and carers, and there was also concern about the potential loss of specific clubs such as badminton and bowling.

It was noted that the new housing development in the village could support increased usage of the facility, if it was better advertised or if the offer available at the site was expanded.

**Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract**

**Consultation Summary Report**

Just over a quarter (28%) of the 190 respondents that answered the question agreed with the proposal to remove Downlands from the contract with Everyone Active; 20% (39 respondents) strongly agreed and a further 8% (15 respondents) agreed. They cited the low usage did not provide good value for money and the outdated facilities.

39 comments from respondents suggested that the facility should be developed rather than removed from the Contract.

It should be noted that many comments assumed removing of the Centre from the Leisure contract meant closure of the facility.

Summary of Responses by Question

**1. Which of the following best describes you? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 189 | 91.30% |
| A user of the service | 71 | 34.30% |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 3 | 1.45% |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 7 | 3.38% |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 7 | 3.38% |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 6 | 2.90% |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 6 | 2.90% |
| A District Councillor | 2 | 0.97% |
| A partner organisation | 3 | 1.45% |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 0 | 0% |
| Other - please specify below: | 9 | 4.35% |

- Youth volunteer - uses facility to deliver activities for young people.
- Church warden
- Family member of a user
- Parent of a child at a local school
- Compton Harriers running club member.

**2. Do you currently use Downland Sports Centre?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 80 | 39.41% |
| No, I use an alternative sports/leisure centre | 46 | 22.66% |
| No, I don't use a sports/leisure centre | 77 | 37.93% |

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| **Total** | **203** | **100%** |

4 respondents did not answer this question.

**3. How far do you travel to access Downland Sports Centre (single journey)?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 1 mile | 48 | 60.00% |
| 1 - 2 miles | 10 | 12.50% |
| 3 - 5 miles | 14 | 17.50% |
| 6 - 10 miles | 6 | 7.50% |
| Over 10 miles | 2 | 2.50% |
| **Total** | **80** | **100%** |

127 respondents did not answer this question.

**4. How do you travel to Downland Sports Centre? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Walk/Run/Wheel | 48 | 60.00% |
| Bicycle | 7 | 8.75% |
| Bus | 1 | 1.25% |
| Car | 42 | 52.50% |
| Carshare | 5 | 6.25% |
| Other | 2 | 2.50% |

80 respondents answered this question.

**5. Which of the following alternative sports/leisure centres do use? Please select all that apply**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Cotswold Sport Centre | 3 | 6.82% |
| Hungerford Leisure Centre | 4 | 9.09% |
| Kennet Leisure Centre | 9 | 20.45% |
| The Lambourn Centre | 0 | 0.00% |
| Northcroft Leisure Centre | 15 | 34.09% |

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Willink Leisure Centre | 1 | 2.27% |
| Out of District Council facility | 6 | 13.64% |
| Private facility | 20 | 45.45% |

44 respondents answered this question.

**6. How far do you travel to access your alternative sports/leisure centre?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Less than 1 mile | 2 | 4.76% |
| 1 - 2 miles | 8 | 19.05% |
| 3 - 5 miles | 17 | 40.48% |
| 6 - 10 miles | 8 | 19.05% |
| Over 10 miles | 7 | 16.67% |
| **Total** | **42** | **100%** |

**7. How do you travel to your alternative sports/leisure centre? Please select all that apply.**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Walk/Run/Wheel | 8 | 19.51% |
| Bicycle | 2 | 4.88% |
| Bus | 1 | 2.44% |
| Car | 39 | 95.12% |
| Carshare | 1 | 2.44% |
| Other | 0 | 0.00% |

41 respondents answered this question

**8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract, which means that Everyone Active would no longer be operating the facility for community use?**

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 39 | 20.53% |
| Agree | 15 | 7.89% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 12 | 6.32% |

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Disagree | 16 | 8.42% |
| Strongly Disagree | 108 | 56.84% |
| **Total** | **190** | **100%** |

It should be noted that, whilst the proposal was to withdraw the Centre from the Leisure contract with Everyone Active, this did not necessarily mean the closure of the Centre, if alternative delivery options were identified.

Two thirds of respondents stated that the Downland Sports Centre should remain within the Leisure contract operated by Everyone Active. The main reasons cited were rural deprivation; limited opportunities for elderly, children and young people; the time, expense and distance to travel to alternative sites and the environmental impact of this. It was also noted that the proposed development within the village of Compton would require future community facilities.

Forty respondents stated that withdrawing the facility from the contract would reduce opportunities for local children to be active, socialise and develop sport skills. It was also raised that the holiday camp run at the centre and children's activities supported working families.

Users of the site who attend the holiday camps, bowls and badminton clubs reported that, if the site was closed to community, their club would no longer be able to operate, as members already travel from surrounding villages to participate. Volunteer sports club coaches indicated that, if the facility was to close, the free coaching they provide would no longer be available.

There was concern that the mental and physical health of the community would be impacted if the Centre was to close and that such a move was contradictory to the Council's Health and Wellbeing strategy.

Additional cost, traffic and the environmental impact of travel to alternative sites was also noted due to limited local public transport options.

Those respondents that did support the proposal cited poor outdated facilities, limited accessibility, poor value compared to usage and that the money could have greater impact if used in alternative ways.

It was suggested that the money should be redirected to other areas of need and comment was also made about the limited opening hours and whether staffing levels could be reduced or staff replaced with volunteers.

It was suggested that, if the Centre was removed from the contract, it could be managed locally or that the site could be given to another provider, community group, the school or volunteers to run.

It was suggested that increasing the offer, opening hours and investing in the facility to improve the standards may result in more people using the centre.

Increasing targeted marketing to the local community was also frequently suggested to increase attendances and viability of the centre.

There was a misunderstanding from some respondents that the facility included the swimming pool on The Downs School site. This is not owned or operated by West Berkshire Council.

There was little support for an outreach service to be delivered in replacement for the Downland Sport Centre remaining open.

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

125 responses received. There was concern that removing Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Contract would result in reduced access, fewer community programmes or a deterioration of services, and that this potential loss could disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, such as children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

It was also suggested that rural communities are disadvantaged and have limited access to services compared to the larger towns. Further reduction in facilities might lead to increased costs for local residents or reduced availability of affordable leisure options, which could exacerbate health inequalities.

Some groups were identified as being particularly affected by the proposal including those that do not have access to a car due to age, health, affordability; as public transport is limited in the area.

There was concern that children and young people and older people do not have many opportunities within the village to participate in active recreation and that if the clubs and holiday camps were to stop then these groups may find it harder to access alternative provision and would have to travel further to engage in activities. It was felt that people from lower socioeconomic groups would be most impacted, and this could increase health inequalities further.

Other comments suggested that the possible loss of holiday clubs would impact people that work or have caring responsibilities as it would increase the cost and time required to access alternative provision.

Although the Centre has no disabled changing facilities and is not an accessible facility, it was suggested that the holiday camp and activities in a close geographical range to families in the village made the Centre more accessible for those with disabilities that do not need adapted facilities.

The EQIA has been updated to reflect this.

**10. If you think our proposed change might have a negative effect on you or other people, do you have any suggestions for how we could minimise it, should we proceed? If so, please provide details.**

111 responses received. Although two thirds of respondents did not support the proposal to remove the Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure contract, a number of suggestions were offered to mitigate the impact if it was removed.

Some felt that the Council should be looking to increase the facilities and services on offer in conjunction with the school not reducing them. Several responses suggested that the school could take on the facility and operate it, but others raised concerns that the school provision would cease due to financial implications of having to run and maintain the facility without Council contributions.

Alternatives suggested included passing ownership, equipment and operations to a community group, local key holder, volunteers or another private business.

Phased closure and tailored alternatives, in consultation with current users of the Centre, were suggested including detailed signposting of other facilities.

It was also suggested that the Council invests in the current facility and improves the offer, builds a new Sports Centre or relocates gym equipment to another location within Compton.

If the Centre is to be closed, it was suggested that an increase in bus service or provision of alternative regular or free transport would be needed to enable more residents to access alternative sites.

**11. 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.**

92 responses received.

**Leisure Service**

It was suggested that money could be saved by closing a different leisure centre that may be closer to alternative sites, or that funding identified for other sites could be redirected to the Downland Sport Centre.

Reviewing the Leisure contract was suggested to save money with some people voicing concerns about a national organisation running a small community facility.

Seeking external grants focused on improving public health and fitness or community fundraising initiatives were also suggested, as was seeking sponsorship or partnership agreements with local businesses to generate additional revenue for the Sports Centre.

**Downland Sports Centre**

There was a clear indication that targeted advertisement to the local community could be increased in the villages surrounding the Centre.

It was also suggested that reducing gym membership fees may attract more participants or increase fees for current room hire may generate more income. By better advertising of facilities that were available for hire it may attract more sports clubs to run from the centre.

The running of additional sports clubs (i.e. dance, Pilates, fitness classes) was also suggested and one respondent suggested removing the gym equipment and changing the gym into a studio.

It was suggested that, working with the school to negotiate the hours open to the community, could generate more use of the centre. Another alternative to removing the Centre from the Leisure contract, was to reduce the opening hours and staff costs.

It was also proposed that volunteers could be used to replace staff or that the School Sixth formers could volunteer at the site as work experience.

It was noted that the development of an additional 200 homes in the village, would potentially put more strain on the existing infrastructure and community services. It was proposed that a portion of any development funding (CIL or Section 106) be specifically allocated to enhance and maintain the Downland Sports Centre.

Many responses suggested that the Council should invest in the Centre and improve and expand the facility including a few suggesting offering a café which could generate income for the service. A further suggestion was to evaluate energy use and explore green energy solutions to reduce operational costs in the long term while aligning with sustainability goals.

**Wider council savings**

Cost savings suggested for the wider Council included:

- Considering a park and ride for Newbury town centre which could increase usage of buses and reduce traffic to the town centre.
- Employing a consultant to look into wasteful and inefficient practices.

- Turning off streetlights between midnight and 5.00am.
- Reducing rubbish collections to a monthly collection.
- Reducing grass cutting.
- Reducing library opening hours.
- Scrapping road schemes such as the Stockcross cycle lane.
- Reviewing contracts to ensure they provide value for money.
- Obtaining at least three quotations for any service or contract purchased.
- Selling off assets.
- Changing offices into affordable rented homes.
- Building and managing a velodrome to generate income.
- Auditing non-essential spending.
- Expanding the use of volunteers to support non-essential but valuable community services.
- Reviewing procurement and the authorized suppliers to ensure they remain the most competitive supplier.
- Reducing contractor use and bring work "in-house".
- Reducing bureaucracy, meetings and salaries and expenses within the Council.
- Charging for premium Council services by introducing modest fees for non-essential Council services that are currently free or adopt a “user-pays” model for certain activities, while ensuring that essential services remain accessible to all.

## 12. Any further comments?

Many responses repeated earlier comments, including both supportive and unsupportive views.

Some respondents were keen to understand what alternatives were planned for the building and meeting service obligations if the Centre was removed from the Contract.

It was also commented that usage figures were higher than stated in a recent Executive meeting and that they could not be compared with other centres that were open for longer hours.

There was also concern about the financial impact on the school if the costs of running the Centre were not shared with the Leisure service, and that, if there was no further capital investment, the school would be responsible for a facility in need of refurbishment with no funds to resource it.

There were also comments that were unrelated to the consultation as the fundraising at The Downs School is not related to the leisure contract.

As stated above, a number of comments assumed closure of the Centre rather than simply its removal from the Leisure contact.

## 13. Demographics of respondents

Of the people who provided demographic information:

- 56 % of respondents were female and 37% male.
- The majority of respondents were from RG206 or RG207 postcodes.
- 70% of respondents were aged between 35 and 65.
- 86% identified as White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British, 3% as White other, 2% as Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, 1% as Asian or Asian British and 1% as White Irish.
- 75% said that they did not have a disability or long term health condition, 9 % reported that they did.

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

Jessica Harrison
Principal Sport and Leisure Officer

Jude Thomas
Sport and Leisure Manager

Sport and Leisure
2 January 2025

***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.*

[i] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/balancing-our-budget
[ii] https://www.westberks.gov.uk/consultations

# West Berkshire Council

# Equity Impact Assessment

December 2024

Contents

## Section 1: Summary details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Directorate and Service Area** | Place – Sport and Leisure |
| **What is being assessed** (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | Proposal to remove Downland Sport Centre from the Leisure Contract |
| **Is this a new or existing function or policy?** | Downland Sport Centre is currently included in the Leisure Contract |
| **Summary of assessment**<br><br>Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?<br><br>(following completion of the assessment). | The proposal is to remove Downland Sport Centre from the Leisure Contract as it is geographically remote, with a small range of facilities and, consequently, attracts limited membership and use. If the Downland Sport Centre is removed from the contract, it is intended that outreach provision is further developed in the area to bridge the gap created and specifically target identified groups. This would ensure that the leisure offer was more focused and impactful.<br><br>Potential benefits:<br>• Revenue saving from reduction in management fee to Everyone Active.<br>• Avoidance of any requirement for future capital investment.<br>• Improved health and well-being of targeted groups within outreach programme.<br>• More appropriate leisure provision to meet the priorities of the Leisure strategy.<br><br>Consultation with residents raised concerns that the proposal may impact negatively on the health and well-being of rural residents, and that it may disproportionately impact specific groups. Groups highlighted during consultation include children and young people, older adults, people with disabilities, people from low economic background and those who are unable to drive.<br><br>The opportunities offered by the facility are limited so initially the impact was not thought to be significant, and could be mitigated, to some extent, with the delivery of an outreach programme. However, there was little support for an |

| | |
|---|---|
| | outreach programme and residents reported that they believe that the holiday camps and clubs that run from the Centre are vital to the community in providing positive recreation for health and wellbeing. |
| **Completed By** | Jessica Harrison |
| **Authorised By** | Jude Thomas |
| **Date of Assessment** | 6th January 2025 |

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

| | |
|---|---|
| **Context / Background**<br><br>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | The Downland Sport Centre is remote and limited in its current offer for community use and, as such, attracts relatively limited footfall This amounts to 0.5% of attendances across the contract. The cost to the Council is disproportionately high, when compared to the other six centres, given the attendance levels.<br><br>If the facility was removed from the Contract, a net revenue saving of approximately £30,000 per annum could be realised together with the avoidance of additional capital investment.<br><br>Demographically, the area of Ridgeway, in which the Centre is situated, is one of West Berkshire's least deprived areas, although it does face a higher prevalence of poor health conditions including obesity and hypertension. It is also one of our most deprived wards for the Access to Healthy Assets and Hazards domain. It is clear that there are some health needs in this Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) relevant to physical activity. Removing the facility from the Contract could reduce opportunities for residents in the local community to access leisure facilities which could result negatively on the health of the local population. That said, the opportunities offered by the facility are limited so the offer at centre would need to be reviewed and likely need investment to meet the needs of the community. Alternative options suggested through the consultation were that the school or a community organisation could run the facility. During the consultation there was little support for an outreach service, as suggested in the initial proposal, to mitigate the impact on health inequalities if the Centre was closed for community use. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Proposals**<br><br>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action. | The proposal under consideration was to remove the Downland Sport Centre from the Contract. The consultation responses reported that 124 respondents (65%) of the 190 respondents that answered the question (60% of total respondents) were not in favour of withdrawing the Centre from the Contract with Everyone Active. 28% voted in favour of removing it from the contract and the remaining responses were neutral.<br><br>There was concern that the proposal would negatively impact the health and wellbeing of the local population as difficulties in accessing alternative facilities due to travel time, limited public transport and cost would prove to be barriers to people engaging in active leisure. It was also highlighted that the health and wellbeing of children and young people and the elderly may be disproportionately affected. The environmental impact of accessing other sites was also noted.<br><br>It was noted that the new housing development in the village would require community facilities to meet the needs of the growing community.<br><br>There were 39 comments suggesting the council invest in the facility to improve the offer available at the site.<br><br>It is, therefore, recommended that Downland Sport Centre remains in the Leisure Contract. |
| **Evidence / Intelligence**<br><br>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments. | Wider consultation with the community gave a better understanding of the impact of removing Downland Sport Centre from the Contract and what the impact might be on certain groups.<br><br>According to the Public health profile: Ridgeway Ward, West Berkshire on Leisure domain: the northern LSOA of Ridgeway scores 1 (where 10 is most deprived). Health deprivation and disability: scores 9 (where 10 is least deprived). However, there are still households from lower socio-economic groups and the consultation highlighted that removing low-cost opportunities to be active might exacerbate health inequalities. The northern LSOA of Ridgeway has a higher than West Berks average prevalence of: Obesity, Harmful or hazardous drinking and Current smoking. There is a need for opportunities to be physically active in that area and the proposal for an outreach programme was not supported by respondents to the consultation.<br><br>Removing the facility from the Contract might result in additional car usage for the local population to access leisure opportunities. The consultation feedback suggested that people from lower socio-economic groups might be disproportionately affected if an affordable leisure option was removed due to an increase in costs to access other facilities. There was also concern that those without access to personal transport such as children, young people and the elderly may be negatively impacted as they would need to travel to other sites. The consultation feedback |

| | |
|---|---|
| | highlighted concerns about the environmental impact of more cars on the roads and the distance to access alternatives, both for residents to access sport and leisure and the opportunity of childcare provided by the holiday camps.<br><br>Travel to the centre was split with 66% reporting that they walk, run or wheel and 52% that they travel by car. Active travel was higher to site than expected so the consultation has shown there would be a negative impact to the environment and the closure would impact the large amount of non-car users. |
| **Alternatives considered / rejected**<br><br>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option. | The proposal to remove the Downland Sport Centre from the Contract could have resulted in a net revenue saving of approximately £30,000 per annum and would have avoided any need for future capital investment. However, 65% of the 190 respondents that answered the question were not in favour of withdrawing the centre from the Contract with Everyone Active.<br><br>During the consultation there was little support for an outreach service, as suggested in the initial proposal to mitigate the impact on health inequalities, if the centre was closed for community use.<br><br>Alternative options reported by the consultation responses were that the school or a community organisation could possibly run the facility.<br><br>Other suggestions included using grant fundraising, community fundraising or business levies to improve the facilities and offer at the centre, and more extensive advertising would result in higher usage and make the site more profitable. |

| Section 3: Impact Assessment - **Protected Characteristic** | **No Impact** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **Description of Impact** | **Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts** | **Action owner*** (*Job Title, Organisation) | **Timescale and monitoring arrangements** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | During the consultation participants reported that children, young people and older adults would be disproportionately affected due to not being able or wanting to travel further to access sport and recreation. Activities within Compton are limited and if the classes were to stop then several participants reported that they would stop engaging in their chosen activities. | Outreach work could be developed to provide opportunities for groups, however an Outreach model was not supported in consultation. | Jessica Harrison<br><br>Principal Sport and Leisure Officer | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Disability** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | The Downland Sports Centre does not meet the current requirements for community use, due to size, accessibility, and age. The centre is not fully accessible; there is no lift, and no accessible change facility. However, during the consultation families reported that the Sports Centre does provide adaptive activities, and the locality of the centre increases the accessibility for individuals with disabilities that do not need accessible changing. | | Jessica Harrison<br><br>Principal Sport and Leisure Officer | |
| **Gender Reassignment** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Marriage & Civil Partnership** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pregnancy & Maternity** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | The consultation feedback reported that people with childcare or caring responsibilities may be disproportionately affected due to the additional travel time it would take to access an alternative facility. | | | |
| **Race** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Sex** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Sexual Orientation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Religion or Belief** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural communities** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | The immediate area does face a higher prevalence of poor health conditions including obesity and hypertension. It is one of West Berkshire's most deprived wards for the Access to Healthy Assets and Hazards domain. It is clear that there are some health needs in this Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA) relevant to physical activity. | Outreach work could be developed to provide opportunities for groups, however an Outreach model was not supported in consultation. | Jessica Harrison<br>Principal Sport and Leisure Officer | |
| **Areas of deprivation** | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | The consultation highlighted that although the demographic data shows that there is higher wealth in that area, it does not mean that there are not poorer residents. In an area with a mixture of low to very high affluence, removing a low-cost | Outreach work could be developed to provide opportunities for groups, however an Outreach model was not supported in consultation. | Jessica Harrison<br>Principal Sport and Leisure Officer | |

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | service further exacerbates health inequalities. | | | |
| **Displaced communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | It is not thought that displaced communities would be disproportionately affected by the proposal. | NA | Jessica Harrison<br>Principal Sport and Leisure Officer | |
| **Care experienced people** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | Everyone Active report on the number of care experienced people who access the leisure centres. In the July to Sep 2024, there were no known care experienced users of the centre. | NA | Jessica Harrison<br>Principal Sport and Leisure Officer | |
| **The Armed Forces Community** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

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## Section 4: Review

**Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Review Date** | **2/1/2025 – No change proposed** |
| **Person Responsible for Review** | **Jessica Harrison** |
| **Authorised By** | **Jude Thomas** |

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract | | | | Service Director: April Peberdy<br>Author: | 14 January 2025 (Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Proposal:** | To remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract, which means that Everyone Active would no longer be operating the facility for community use. | | | | |
| **Total budget 2024/25:** | | **Initial proposed saving 2025/26:** | £30,000 | **Recommended saving 2025/26:** | |
| **No. of responses:** | In total, 207 responses were received. The breakdown of responses is as follows: | | | | |

| | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| A resident of West Berkshire | 189 | 91.30% |
| A user of the service | 71 | 34.30% |
| A visitor to West Berkshire | 3 | 1.45% |
| A West Berkshire business owner | 7 | 3.38% |
| Employed by a West Berkshire business | 7 | 3.38% |
| Employed by West Berkshire Council | 6 | 2.90% |
| A Parish/Town Councillor | 6 | 2.90% |
| A District Councillor | 2 | 0.97% |
| A partner organisation | 3 | 1.45% |
| A West Berkshire Council service provider | 0 | 0% |
| Other - please specify below: | 9 | 4.35% |

List others here

- Youth volunteer - use facility to delivery activities for young people
- Church warden
- Family member of a user
- Parent of a child at a local school
- Compton Harriers running club member

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract | | Service Director: April Peberdy<br>Author: | 14 January 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | We also received two email responses from:<br>• Compton Archery Club<br>• Compton Parish Council<br>We received no petitions. | | |
| **Key issues raised:** | Of the 190 responses received for the question, nearly two-thirds (65%) disagreed with the proposal to withdraw Downlands from the Leisure Contract with Everyone Active; 57% (108 respondents) strongly disagreed and a further 8% (16 respondents) disagreed.<br><br>The reasons stated included that the facility was vital to the rural community and the activities run from the Centre supported the physical health and wellbeing of residents.<br><br>There was concern that, due to limited public transport and the time taken to travel to alternative sites, children and young people and older adults, without independent access to personal transport, might be disproportionately impacted.<br><br>There was specific mention that the holiday camps supported local working parents and carers, and there was also concern about the potential loss of specific clubs such as badminton and bowling.<br><br>It was noted that the new housing development in the village could support increased usage of the facility, if it was better advertised or if the offer available at the site was expanded.<br><br>Of the 190 respondents that answered the question, 28% agreed with the proposal to remove Downlands from the contract with Everyone Active; 20% (39 respondents) strongly agreed and a further 8% (15 respondents) agreed. They cited the low usage did not provide good value for money and the outdated facilities.<br><br>39 comments from respondents suggested that the facility should be developed rather than removed from the Contract.<br><br>It should be noted that many comments assumed removal of the Centre from the Leisure contract meant closure of the facility. | | |
| **Equality issues:** | The consultation feedback suggested that the proposal would disproportionally affect the rural community it is based in, individuals on low income, children and young people, older adults and those with disabilities. The main reason for this is the means, cost, time and motivation to travel to alternative sites. | | |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| **Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract** | | **Service Director: April Peberdy**<br>**Author:** | **14 January 2025**<br>**(Corporate Board)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | The EQIA has been updated to reflect this. | | |
| **Suggestions for minimising any negative effects of the proposed change:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** | |
| | Increase bus service or provide transport to alternative sites. | Leisure would support this, but it would be it would not be under the remit of the service. | |
| | Passing ownership/management to a third party | This is a possibility for consideration, but it is acknowledged that options may be limited, given the rural location, the current condition and limited offer. | |
| | The Downs School could manage bookings. | West Berkshire Council would be open to discussions with the school but has no authority to dictate that the school should take on operation of this facility. We are keen to engage with the school to find solutions to improve the health and well-being of the students and local community. | |
| | Reduction or increase in operating times. | The operating times are set within legal contract with the Leisure operator, Everyone Active, and the historic agreement with the school. This would require a formal process to review but could be explored if the other parties were receptive to this. | |
| | Advertise the facility more widely. | This is valid and will be addressed with the Leisure provider during the next contract meeting. | |
| | Change pricing of membership. | The formula for setting membership costs is detailed in the specification for the contract and the membership price already reflects the limited offer at the site. | |
| **Suggestions for other savings options:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** | |
| | There were comments about the fundraising by Downs School for the swimming pool and suggestions about opening the swimming pool to community use or increasing fees for usage. | West Berkshire Council does not operate the swimming pool. This facility is run by The Downs School. The removal of the Downland Sports Centre refers to the facilities within the Sports Centre building which are the gym and Sports Hall. The fundraising at The Downs School is not related to the Leisure contract. | |
| | Improve the facilities with investment, make the centre accessible to all. Increase opportunities/better programme etc | If the Downland Sports Centre remains in the contract, then the Council would likely need to consider investment and modernisation of this facility. | |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

**Overview of Responses and Recommendations**

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract | | Service Director: April Peberdy<br>Author: | 14 January 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | A portion of the CIL funds could be specifically allocated to enhance and maintain the Downland Sports Centre | This will be explored with colleagues if the site remains in the contract. | |
| | Divert funding away from other sites or close another site. | The current capital programme for Leisure facilities has been agreed as part of the new contract with Everyone Active. Redirecting funding would have a negative impact on other facilities. | |
| | Usage figures were higher than stated in a recent Executive meeting | The school usage was not reported as part of the consultation because the Leisure contract relates to the community use only. | |
| | Usage data could not be compared with other centres that were open for longer hours. | This point is noted in that the hours of opening are shorter than others, so we are not comparing like for like on performance, although the figure does reflect the impact of the facility on local residents. | |
| **Suggestions for income generation:** | **Suggestion** | **Council response** | |
| | Turning off streetlights between midnight and 5.00am. | This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration. | |
| | Reduce public bin collection where not required to be emptied as often Domestic Rubbish collections could be reduced to a monthly collection | This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration. | |
| | Reduce grass cutting | This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration. | |
| | Reduce library opening hours | This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration. | |
| | Scrap road schemes such as the Stockcross cycle lane. | This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration. | |
| | Review contracts and make sure they are value for money. Get at | The Council complies with procurement rules as specified in the Council's Constitution. | |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

## Overview of Responses and Recommendations

| Budget Proposals 2025/26: Remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract | | Service Director: April Peberdy<br>Author: | 14 January 2025<br>(Corporate Board) |
|---|---|---|---|
| | least three quotations for any service or contract purchased. | | |
| | Sell off assets | A review of all Council owned assets is taking place. | |
| | Change offices into affordable rents (council tax income/ rents) | This suggestion has been noted and will be shared with the relevant teams for consideration. | |
| | Introduce a park and ride to Newbury town centre | The service has reported in the parking consultation that this is not currently considered a cost-effective solution. | |
| | Audit non-essential spending | This practice is already completed by the Council. All spending is currently being reviewed but some projects are capital or grant funded not revenue funded. | |
| **Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:** | 124 respondents (65%) of the 190 respondents that answered the question (60% of total respondents) were not in favour of withdrawing the centre from the Contract with Everyone Active.<br><br>There was concern that the proposal would negatively impact the health and wellbeing of the local population as difficulties in accessing alternative facilities due to travel time, limited public transport and cost would prove to be barriers to people engaging in active leisure. The environmental impact of accessing other sites was also noted.<br><br>Improving and maintaining health and wellbeing of the community, in particular for children and young people and the elderly were also stressed as a reason for the service to remain in the contract.<br><br>It was noted that the new housing development in the village would require community facilities to meet the needs of the growing community.<br><br>There were 39 comments suggesting the council invest in the facility to improve the offer available at the site.<br><br>28% of the 190 respondents that answered the question supported the proposal citing low usage and outdated facilities.<br><br>It is, therefore, recommended that Downland Sport Centre remains in the Leisure contract. | | |

**NB:** This Overview of Responses and Recommendations paper should be read in conjunction with the Consultation Summary Report for this proposal. These can be found in the agenda pack or on our Consultation and Engagement Hub.

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# Draft Waste Management Strategy Public Consultation: Responses Summary:
## *Three weekly general refuse collections from households.*

## Introduction

This report presents the findings of a comprehensive consultation on the Council's draft waste management strategy between 25 September and 6 November 2024., specifically relating to the proposal to reduce the collection frequencies of general refuse (black bins) collections from households. A full summary and report on the Draft Waste Management Strategy will be published in due course.

The consultation survey was completed by 5,073 respondents, including 5,039 residents (approx. 7% of households in the district), 9 parish councils, 30 businesses, 10 local organisations, and 19 visitors. No petitions were received. Respondents were able to provide answers for multiple selections e.g. one could respond as a resident and a local organisation at the same time.

The consultation was publicised through various channels, including the Council's engagement hub, social media platforms, e-newsletters, library drop-in sessions, and direct emails to all parish councils and local housing associations. Additionally, in-person drop-in sessions were organised by the Council's waste officers as follows:

| Location | Times |
|---|---|
| Thatcham Library | Monday, 30 September 2024 from 9.30am to midday |
| Newbury Library | Wednesday, 2 October 2024 from 9am to midday |
| Hungerford Library | Wednesday, 9 October 2024 from 9.30am to midday |
| Burghfield Library | Monday, 14 October 2024 from 2pm to 5pm |
| Theale Library | Friday, 18 October 2024 from 2pm to 5pm |
| Mortimer Library | Monday, 28 October 2024 from 2pm to 5pm |
| Lambourn Library | Friday, 25 October 2024 from 10am to 11.30am |
| Pangbourne Library | Thursday, 31 October 2024 from 9.30am to midday |
| **Newbury Library** | **Monday, 4 November 2024 from 9am to midday** |

These efforts aimed to reach a broad audience and encourage wide participation in the consultation.

The purpose of the consultation was to gather views on the Council's draft waste management strategy, which will guide waste collection and recycling services up to 2032. This timeframe aligns with the end of the current contract with our waste collection and treatment provider.

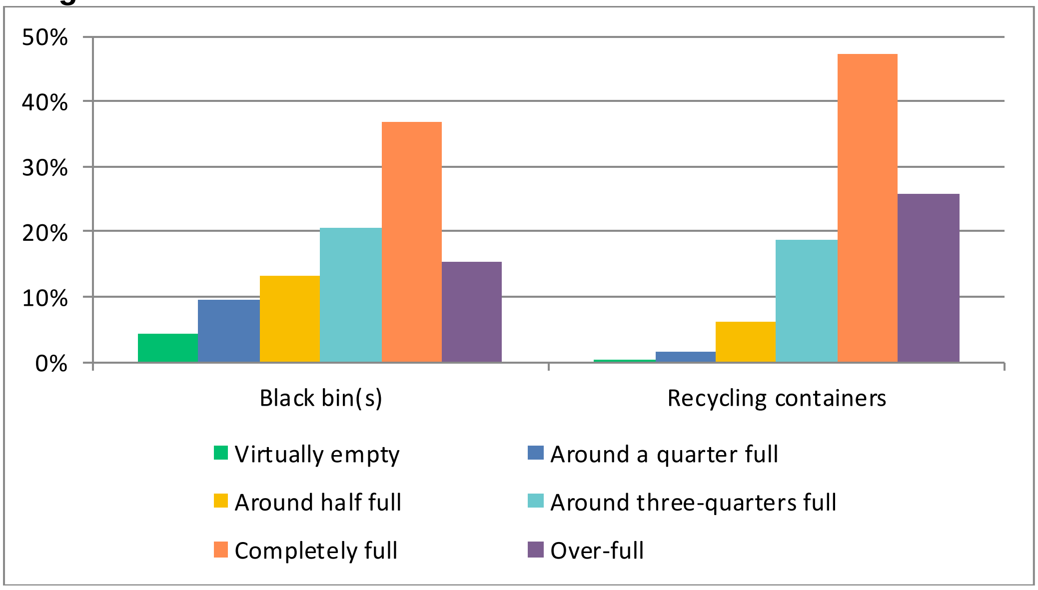
No decisions on potential services changes have been taken yet by the Council. The final strategy will be published in spring 2025, incorporating the feedback provided through this consultation.

**Black Bin Collection Frequencies**

Opinions on black bin collection schedules were divided. While some residents expressed satisfaction with the current (fortnightly) frequency, others called for more frequent collections to manage waste volumes, particularly for larger households and families.

Question 16 asked respondent who receive a kerbside collection h*ow full are your black bin(s) and recycling containers before they are emptied on collection day?*

**Image 1.1**

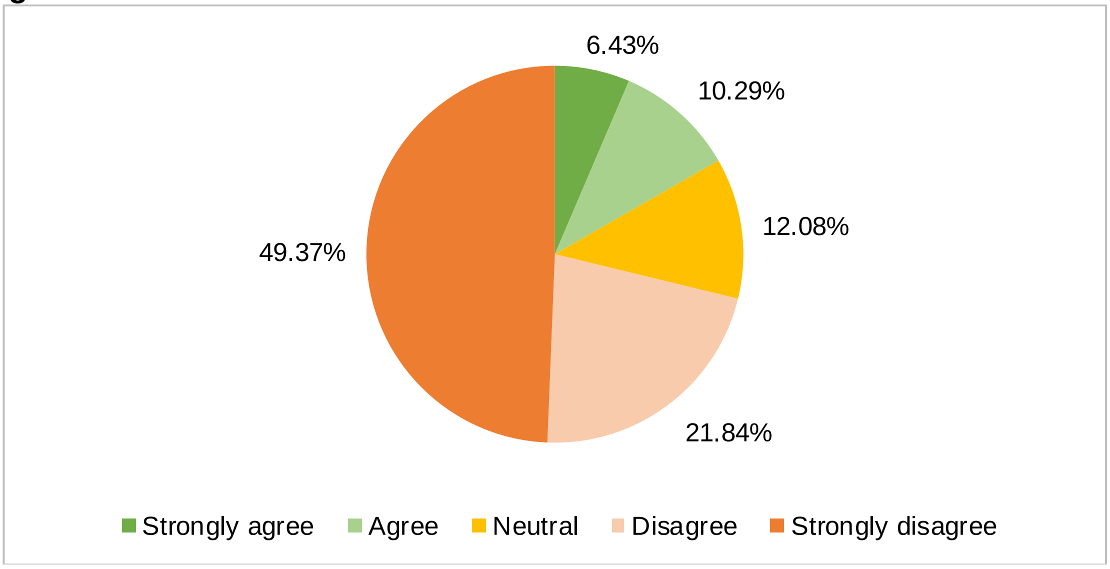



47.7% of residents who have a kerbside collection have space in their black bin on collection day with the current service we provide. Only 26.9% of residents who have a kerbside collection have space in their recycling containers.

This demonstrates that without the addition of collecting more items for recycling, nearly half of our kerbside service users have space within their black bin on collection day, arguably supporting the case for changing the collection frequency to 3-weekly. While also demonstrating a need to publicise our container delivery service, so residents have enough capacity to recycle. We provide extra containers for recycling free of charge.

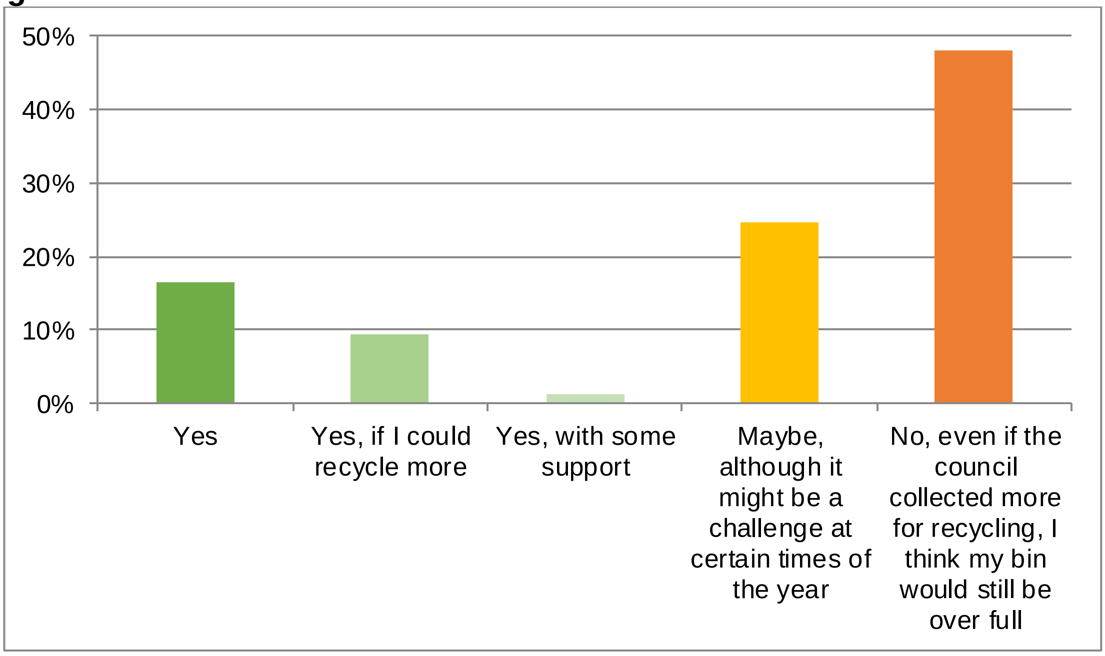
Question 36 asked residents who receive the kerbside or sack collection *service if they agreed or disagreed that three-weekly black bin collections could help increase the amount of waste the Council collects as recycling and reduce the amount of waste households produce*. **71%** disagreed or strongly disagreed that it would. The full result can be found in Image 1.2 below.

**Image 1.2**



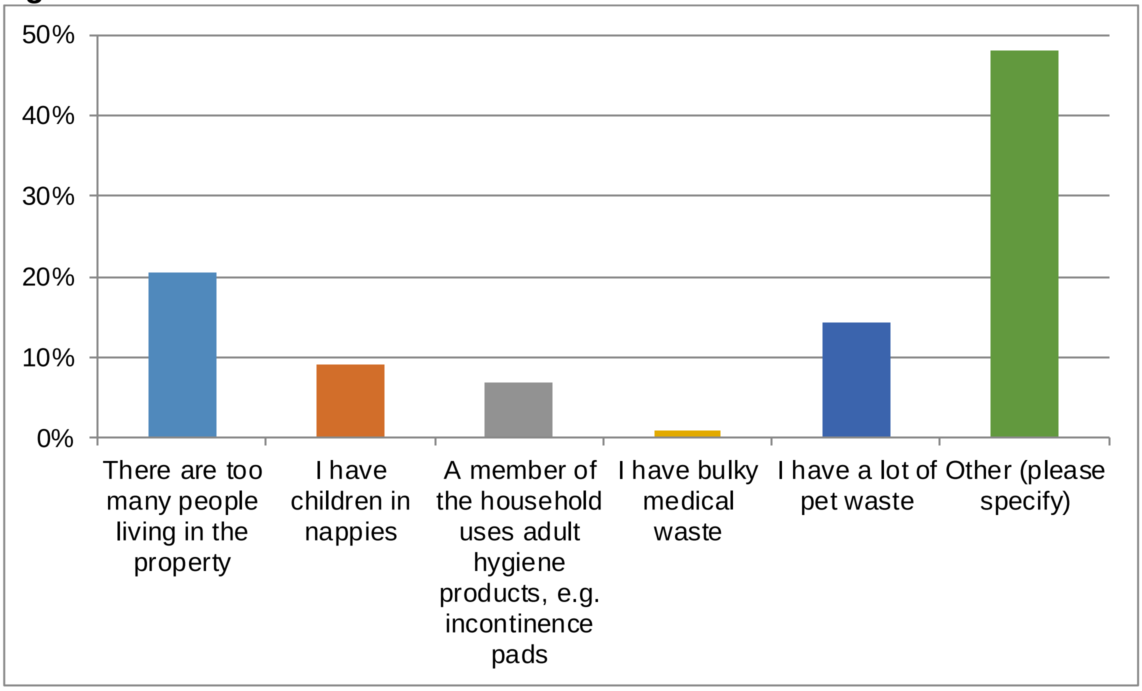

We also asked if their household *would be able to manage if their non-recyclable waste was collected every three weeks* at Question 37. Most respondents stated that they might be able to cope with a reduction to black bin frequencies with adequate support (**52%**). The full response to this question is represented in Image 1.3 below.

**Image 1.3**



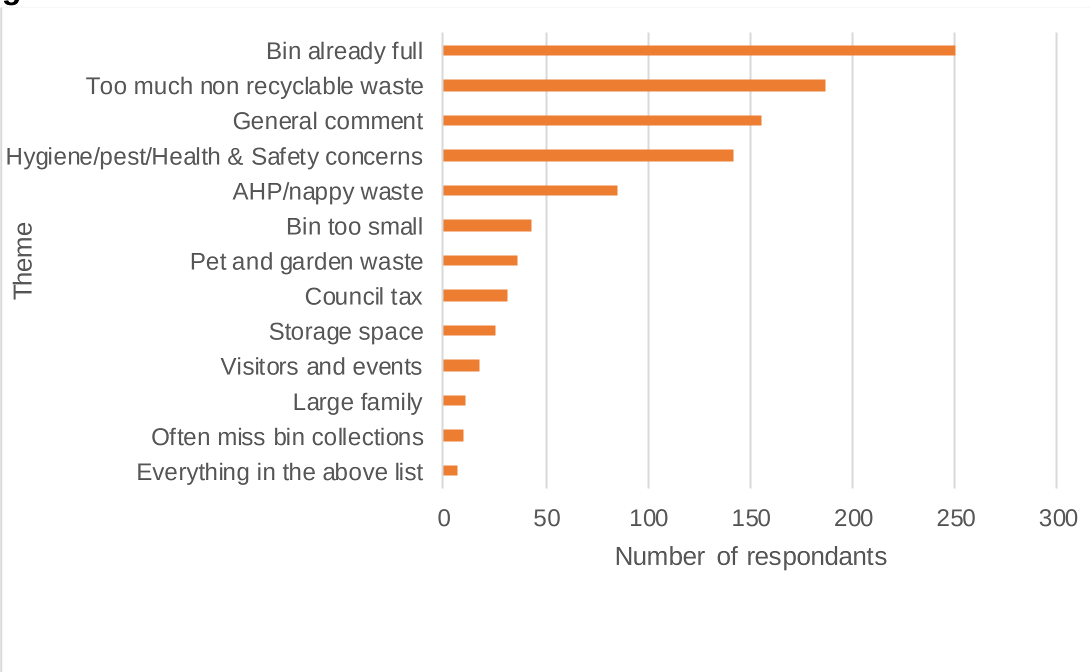

Question 38 asked those who answered no to Question 37 "*what is the main reason that you would be unable to manage?".* Many – 48% – gave an answer not prepopulated as an option, that is analysed below in image 1.4. Of the prepopulated answers, 21% stated that there are too many people living in the property. Image 1.4 shows the full answers.

**Image 1.4**



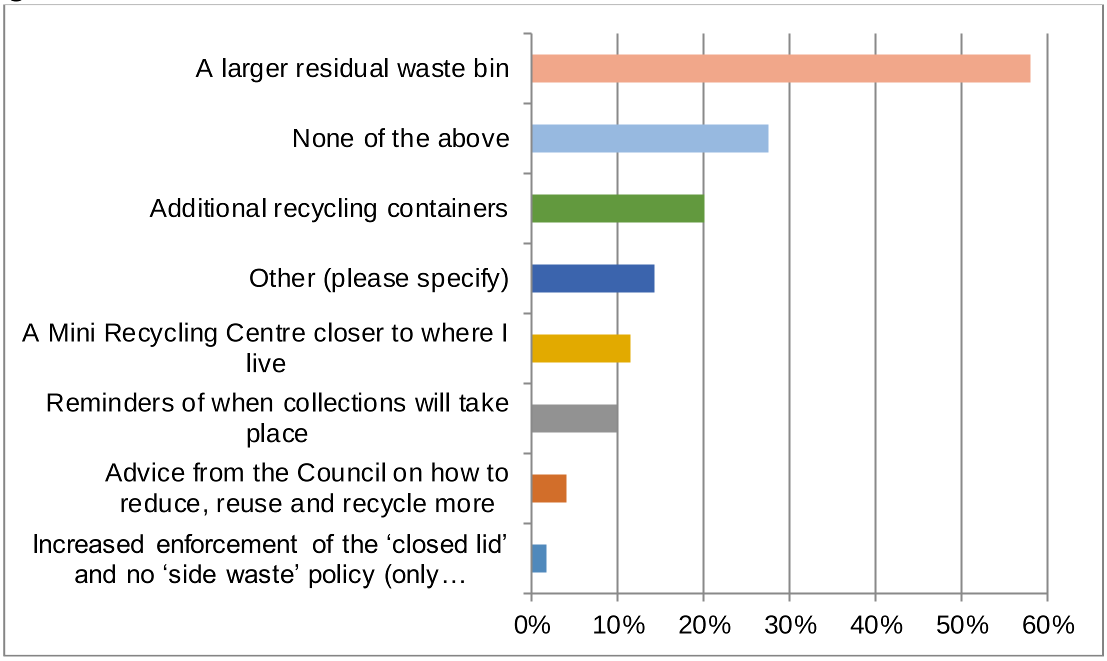

Of the 48% who selected ‘other’, we categorized answers into recurring relevant themes. Most (250 number) stating that their black bin is already full on collection day, with 187 people stating that they have too much non-recyclable waste. 142 people stated a hygiene concern, with 85 people on top of the 144 that mentioned use of nappies or hygiene products within the household as a concern.

**Image 1.5**



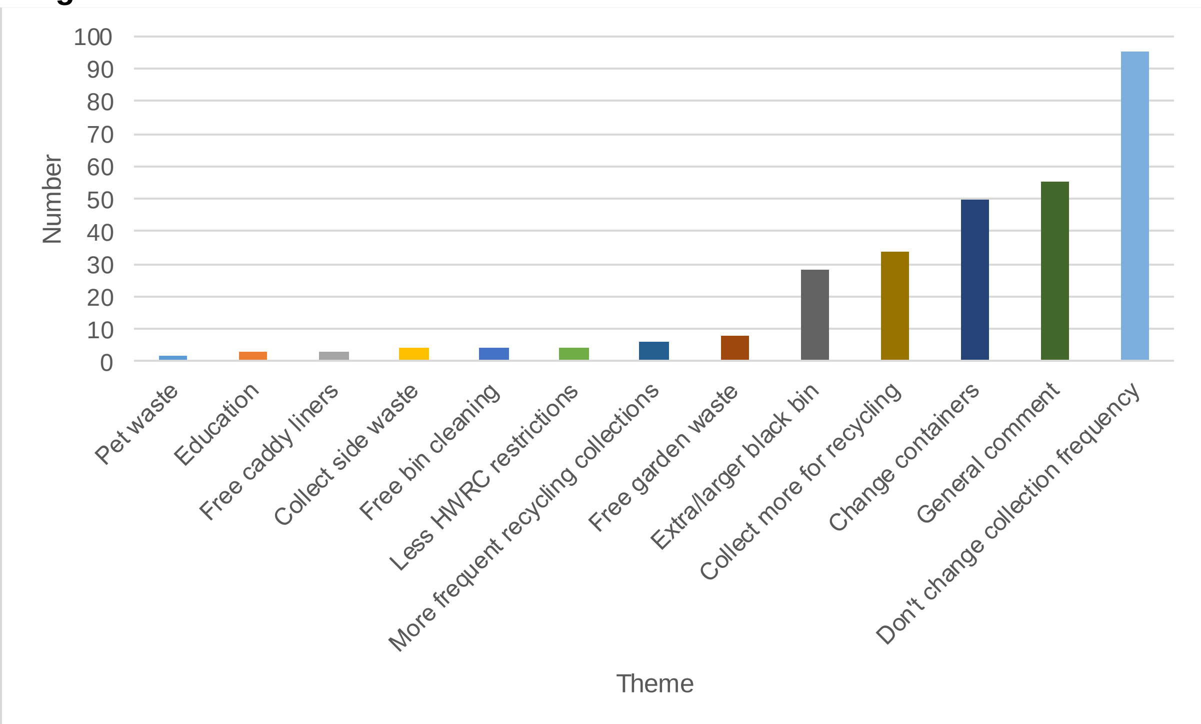

We than asked how we could help those who stated they would not be able to cope if black bin frequencies were changed (Question 39), results are shown below in Image 1.6.

**Image 1.6**




A larger waste bin was selected as the best option to assist those who think that they will struggle with the reduction in collection frequencies. With 'none of the above' following behind with 28% choosing that. 14% selected 'other' which you can see broken down into recurring themes in Image 1.7.

**Image 1.7**

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# West Berkshire Council

# Equity Impact Assessment

February 2025

Contents

## Section 1: Summary details

| | |
|---|---|
| **Directorate and Service Area** | Place, Waste |
| **What is being assessed** (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change). | Three-weekly general refuse collection from households. Reducing the frequency of general refuse (black bin) from once every two weeks, to once every three weeks. |
| **Is this a new or existing function or policy?** | Existing function. |
| **Summary of assessment**<br><br>Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community?<br><br>(following completion of the assessment). | The proposal is to change the general refuse (black bin) collection service from fortnightly to three-weekly collections, as part of the Council's Waste Management Strategy 2025-2032.<br><br>The change will impact all households receiving kerbside collections but not those who have shared communal bin.<br><br>Potential positive impacts associated with this change include:<br><br>• Increased use of the recycling services the Council provide;<br>• Environmental benefits through waste reduction and reduced carbon emissions; and<br>• Cost savings for the Council, helping to achieve more value for money for ratepayers and to maintain other essential services provided by the Council.<br><br>Potential negative impacts include:<br><br>• Increased difficulty for larger-than-typical households that generate higher volumes of waste.<br>• Challenges for selected residents with medical needs, such as those requiring incontinence products, who may need additional support.<br>• Risk of increased fly-tipping and waste contamination if households are unable to manage waste effectively. |

| | |
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| | The proposal does not discriminate against any particular demographic. However, certain householders may need additional support from the Council to adapt to this change. To mitigate this, the Council will:<br><br>• Offer additional waste capacity (e.g. larger bins) for eligible households;<br>• Continue to provide medical waste collections for eligible households; and<br>• Provide enhanced service communications and waste reduction support to residents (e.g. Real Nappy give-aways and cash-back scheme, updates in our newsletters and on social media channels, targeted media campaigns and ongoing advice provision to customers).<br><br>English councils like Bracknell Forest, East Devon, and Stratford-on-Avon have successfully adopted similar changes, and achieved higher recycling rates and cost efficiencies. More English authorities such as East Suffolk, Cheshire East, and Bristol have either decided or are currently actively considering this change. The Council's officers have been engaging with peers in council areas who have already implemented this change to learn lessons, which can be used to inform our implementation approach. Officers are reasonably confident that the identified mitigation measures will help ensure fairness and accessibility for all affected groups. |
| **Completed By** | Daniel Warne, Waste Manager |
| **Authorised By** | Kofi Adu-Gyamfi, Service Lead – Climate Change |
| **Date of Assessment** | 7/2/2025 |

## Section 2: Detail of proposal

| | |
|---|---|
| **Context / Background**<br><br>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | The Council is proposing a shift from fortnightly to three-weekly refuse collections as part of its emerging Waste Management Strategy 2025-2032. This change aligns with national waste reduction policies and aims to significantly increase recycling rates, reduce waste generation and associated disposal costs, and support help achieve better environmental outcomes. Reductions in waste generation and management will also result in reduced carbon emissions and contribute to the achievement of the Council's aspiration to get to Net Zero by 2030. |
| **Proposals**<br><br>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action. | The proposal will change kerbside refuse collections from fortnightly to three-weekly in 2025, while maintaining weekly food waste and dry recycling collections at their current frequency. Refuse collections from communal properties will also remain at their current weekly frequency.<br><br>This approach has been chosen as it:<br><br>• Reduces residual waste by encouraging recycling (42% of black bin waste is potentially recyclable).<br>• Ensures sufficient bin capacity, with West Berkshire currently providing the highest in Berkshire (120 litres (l) per week), reducing to 80l per week—still in line with comparable authorities. For example, Bracknell Forest currently provides their residents with a general waste bin capacity of 80l per week.<br>• Mitigates financial risks, reducing exposure to £1.4m in potential annual UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) costs. The ETS costs are expected to come in from c. 2028.<br>• Aligns with national waste policies for increasing recycling and reducing avoidable waste generation. It will also support the Council's Net Zero by 2030 goal.<br>• Follows proven success from other UK councils, where three-weekly collections increased recycling rates and delivered improved VfM and service efficiency. |
| **Evidence / Intelligence** | **Waste Composition Analysis:** Latest findings show that 42% of black bin contents could be recycled via the kerbside service. |

| | |
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| List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments. | **External technical advisors:** Modelling undertaken by Eunomia Research & Consulting demonstrates that this is the best practicable environmental option. The change is expected to increase our recycling rate by at least 5%.<br><br>**Capacity Comparison:** West Berkshire currently provides the highest black bin capacity in Berkshire at 120l per week, compared to the regional average of 85l per week. This proposal will reduce capacity to 80l per week,<br><br>**Environmental Goals**: The change is aligned with the Council's Net Zero by 2030 target, and the need to divert waste from incineration and landfill.<br><br>**Legislative Changes:** The UK ETS will extend to Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities by 2028, adding c. £1.4 million in annual costs onto the Council's expenditure unless more waste is avoided or recycled.<br><br>**Financial Savings:** Estimated savings of £150,000 per year by reducing waste disposal costs and landfill tax.<br><br>**Proven Success Elsewhere:** Councils like Bracknell, East Devon, and Stratford-on-Avon have adopted similar changes, seeing higher recycling rates and cost efficiencies.<br><br>**Consultation response:** During a public consultation undertaken between September and November 2024, 47% of respondents reported having space in their black bin on collection day, even before the recent expansion of kerbside plastic recycling to include plastic pots, tubs and trays.<br><br>Whilst majority of respondents indicated they would like to keep the existing collection frequency, 52% of respondents stated that their household could manage if non-recyclable (black bin) waste was collected every three weeks, out of that group of respondent's, half stated *'maybe, although it might be challenging at certain times of the year*'. |

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| Alternatives considered / rejected | |
|---|---|
| **Alternatives considered / rejected**<br><br>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option. | Alternatives considered and rejected include ("✓" denotes a potentially positive outcome; and "×" denotes a potentially negative outcome):<br><br>1. Four-Weekly Refuse Collections<br><br>✓ Would further improve recycling rates and reduce carbon emissions by encouraging even greater waste reduction.<br>✓ Aligns with national sustainability goals and would result in greater cost savings over time.<br><br>× Likely to be impractical for many residents, particularly larger households and those with medical waste needs.<br>× High risk of non-compliance, leading to increased fly-tipping or waste contamination.<br>× Public resistance likely to be significantly higher, making implementation and enforcement more challenging.<br><br>2. Changing Bin Size Instead of Collection Frequency<br><br>✓ Reducing black bin size to e.g. 180l and still collecting the waste fortnightly would limit residual waste capacity, driving better recycling behaviours while maintaining fortnightly collections.<br><br>× High financial cost—estimated at £2 million+ to replace bins across all households.<br>× Operational challenges, including the logistics of replacing over 60,000 bins.<br>× Would not provide the same financial or carbon savings as reducing collection frequency.<br><br>3. Doing Nothing (Retaining Fortnightly Collections)<br><br>× Misses the opportunity to improve recycling rates, with 42% of black bin contents currently recyclable via kerbside services.<br>× West Berkshire's waste generation remains high (427kg per person), making waste reduction efforts essential.<br>× Other councils adopting three-weekly collections have seen recycling increase, demonstrating that inaction would leave West Berkshire behind. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | - Fails to address key financial pressures, particularly the £1.4m annual cost from the upcoming UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) expansion. |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

| Protected Characteristic | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of Impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Disability** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | No change from the current situation as the Council provides Assisted Collections to selected householders who are unable to physically present their bins for collection. | | | |
| **Gender Reassignment** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Marriage & Civil Partnership** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Pregnancy & Maternity** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Race** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Sex** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Sexual Orientation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Religion or Belief** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

| Additional community impacts | No Impact | Positive | Negative | Description of impact | Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts | Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation) | Timescale and monitoring arrangements |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Rural communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Areas of deprivation** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Displaced communities** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **Care experienced people** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |
| **The Armed Forces Community** | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ | | | | |

## Section 4: Review

**Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Review Date** | 1 April 2026 |
| **Person Responsible for Review** | Daniel Warne |
| **Authorised By** | Kofi Adu-Gyamfi |