

## Participatory Budgeting Governance and Resources: Summary and analysis of comments

### Further town centre regeneration across the Borough

#### Summary of comments

- **Generally supportive comments although with some specific opposition to Wokingham town Centre Regeneration. Some desire expressed for Earley to undergo regeneration. One comment suggested approval would be conditional on WBC demonstrating a net return on investment**

#### Areas for possible for consideration (depending on other sources of information)

Response to regeneration was more positive than some previous engagement exercises, which may suggest other areas have more favourable attitude

The desire for evidence of a net return would be impossible to provide in short term however the request may suggest that a clearly presented business case may be useful in explaining long-term regeneration aspirations

### Reduce electoral cycle from once a year to once every four years

#### Summary of comments

- **This proposal attracted the most comments with generally strong support as a cost saving. Concerns raised included the impact on democratic accountability and whether the need for other elections (EU, Police, etc.) would make it impractical.**
- **Other linked suggestions included reducing the number of wards, reducing members per ward, reducing members allowances and abolishing town councils**

#### Areas for possible for consideration (depending on other sources of information)

The higher number of supportive comments suggests this would a well-received saving. This is in line with other proposals that can be seen as non-detrimental to residents

### Merge / share services with other local authorities

#### Summary of comments

- **This proposal received almost unanimous support with the key provisos being the need to show economies of scale and the need to maintain quality of service. Some respondents called for full council mergers**

#### Analysis

The higher number of supportive comments suggest this would a well-received saving – in line with other proposals that can be seen as non-detrimental to residents

### Reduce Council Tax discounts and other benefits

#### Summary of comments

- **Fewer comments than on some proposals with general opposition due to impact on less well-off. Suggestion made of offering the opportunity to people not to take the discount**

#### Areas for possible for consideration (depending on other sources of information)

The general opposition to this proposal was linked by some respondents to a perception that less well-off people are already being affected by other cuts.

### Only accept non-cash payment methods from customers

#### Summary of comments

- **As with other 'non-detrimental' options, this received general support with the key concerns that not everybody will be able to access non-cash payment**

#### Areas for possible for consideration (depending on other sources of information)

Responses focussed on the practicality of doing this for all residents – there was no objection to the principle of saving money by some restriction of people's range of payment options

### Reduce buildings used to deliver breadth of council services – greater centralisation of staff into key buildings

#### Summary of comments

- **As with other 'non-detrimental' options, this received general support. Comments focused on how to make further savings by moving to an out-of-town location**

#### Areas for possible for consideration (depending on other sources of information)

One response raised the issue that outlying building serve local communities but in general principle of greater consolidation of WBC into fewer building was not challenged

### Move to electric only publications (including Borough News)

#### Summary of comments

- **Mixed response to the proposal with general support for more electronic publications but only with hard copies available on request and some general opposition**

#### Areas for possible for consideration (depending on other sources of information)

Responses suggest that the principle of saving money by cutting down hard-copy printing may be accepted but that there may still be a significant number of people who rely of printed material

### Move to online delivery of customer service as the default

#### Summary of comments

- **Mixed response to this proposal with some support for the principle but difficulties raised in practice in terms of contacting WBC online and the need for some human interaction**

#### Areas for possible for consideration (depending on other sources of information)

As with options above there was no opposition in principle to saving money through greater use of online services. Issues raised were with practical application for all residents.

### Sell business support services commercially to the wider market

#### Summary of comments

- **This proposal received unanimous support from those who expressed a direct opinion with only other response referring to problems potentially caused by privatisation**

#### Areas for possible for consideration (depending on other sources of information)

The supportive comments suggest this would a well-received proposal – in line with other proposals that can be seen as non-detrimental to residents and there were no comments questioning the principle of WBC raising revenue through increased commercial activity.

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