

West Berkshire Council Consultation on the 2025/26 Budget

Response from Hampstead Norreys Parish Council

Reduce the number of winter gritting routes

1. Which of the following best describes you?

A partner organisation

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?

Hampstead Norreys is a small rural village containing a B road and various hilly slopes. For safety reasons, it is essential for the roads to be gritted.

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?

Remote areas may end up with limited access. The impact on public transport and on cyclists. Whether there are dangerous/difficult hills at the entrance/exit of a location. This may cause distress for elderly drivers who may be too afraid to tackle the roads in poor weather and therefore trapped in their homes.

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.

If a high rate of respondents state this will affect them, this proposal should be reviewed. More information should be distributed about upcoming icy weather and how to drive safely in icy conditions.

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.

No

6. Any further comments?

You need to ensure rural traffic can still flow safely.

Cease providing the Adult Respite (ARC) in the Community Service

1. Which of the following best describes you?

A partner organisation

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?

Disagree

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 mental and physical impact on those affected by this. Respite care is essential for family carers.

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.

Alternative provision must be straightforward, simple to access and of equivalent or improved provision to current arrangements.

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.

Increase rates. Offer the service as an outsourced service to other councils and/or private/public sectors.

6. Any further comments?

Respite care is essential for carers and their charges. Without it or with a lesser service then more problems will be hidden, will disappear behind closed doors and greater problems will develop.

Where to focus spending and an overall 5% increase in fees

1. Which of the following best describes you?

A partner organisation

2. Where do you think we should prioritise our spending? Please choose your top five.

Roads and Transport

Youth Services

Housing and Homelessness

Family Support

Children's Social Care

Comments: Youth services seems a vital aspect particularly in a rural village which would help keep young people from causing socially unacceptable behaviour.

3. To what extent would you support fees and charges increasing by 5%?

Strongly support

Comments: 5% for the majority in the West Berkshire area would be more acceptable in order to get better services

Remove Downland Sports Centre from the Leisure Management Contract

1. Which of the following best describes you?

A partner organisation

2. Do you currently use Downland Sports Centre?

No, I use an alternative sports/leisure centre

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

3-5 miles

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

Car

5. 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?

Disagree

6. 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?

It is important for the health and wellbeing of the local community to have these facilities

7. 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.

It is important this facility is continued even if it is for a shorter period of time ie when it is financially viable

8. 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.

Close when it is not popular - provide coffee shop - have the facility on a pay you go rather than expensive annual fee. Without having access to the financial data very difficult to make a comment

9. Any further comments?

Sports facilities are normally profitable. We have not been using it because we were not aware that the facilities were available. The facility needs to be better advertised within the locality