

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	13 FEBRUARY 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	11
TITLE:	BUDGET SAVING PROPOSAL - CONSULTATION RESULTS FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE READYBIKE SUBSIDY		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	EMMA BAKER	TEL:	0118 937 4881
JOB TITLE:	SENIOR TRANSPORT PLANNER	E-MAIL:	emma.baker@reading.gov.uk

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Corporate Plan and budget for 2016-2019 were set at Council on 23 February 2016. The report outlined the need to develop delivery plans during the 2016/17 year to reduce our overall budget envelope over the period to 2019/20 to bridge the budget gap in all years to 2019/20. Policy Committee agreed that a range of budget saving proposals be investigated further on 18 July 2016, including the removal of the ReadyBike subsidy.
- 1.2 Consultation on the proposal to remove the ReadyBike subsidy was carried out during September. This report summarises the results from the consultation and outlines our recommendation to implement the proposed changes to the scheme.
- 1.3 Appendix A - Equality Impact Assessment scoping report for the removal of the ReadyBike subsidy.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee provides approval to give notice on the current contract for the operation of the ReadyBike cycle hire scheme.
- 2.2 That approval is given to undertake a full procurement process to identify a suitable contractor to operate the scheme commercially without a Council subsidy, in line with original budget saving proposal.
- 2.3 That delegated authority is given to the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, the Head of Legal & Democratic Services and the Head of Finance to enter into contract for the operation of Readybike scheme if a suitable contractor can be identified.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 On 18 July 2016, Policy Committee approved a range of budget saving proposals and authorised Officers to undertake public consultation, including the removal of the

ReadyBike subsidy. Members of the public were invited to respond to the proposal during a month long consultation held throughout September 2016.

4. THE PROPOSAL

Consultation

- 4.1 The online consultation for budget saving proposals that took place from 29th August to 30th September 2016 resulted in the submission of 175 responses to the proposal to remove the ReadyBike subsidy. A summary of consultation responses is outlined below.
- 4.2 Overall approximately 14% of respondents were in favour of the proposal to remove the ReadyBike subsidy whereas 84% were positive about the scheme and therefore supportive of the Council investigating other funding options in order for the scheme to continue. It was unclear whether the remaining 2% of respondents were supportive or unsupportive.
- 4.3 Of the 175 ReadyBike respondents, around 62% live in Reading Borough with a further 13% living in the Greater Reading area. It should be noted that some respondents appeared to use business addresses rather than residential addresses, including several postcodes for Thames Valley Business Park, which may affect the percentage of respondents who reside in Reading Borough or other geographical areas. The main age profile of respondents was 35-44 years (30%) followed by 25-34 years (25%). The majority of respondents considered themselves to be service users (45%) with the second highest category being residents (43%).
- 4.4 Those that were supportive of the proposal to remove the subsidy were largely of the opinion that there would be little or no impact if the scheme was to no longer continue. A couple of respondents also noted the limitations of the existing scheme in terms of network coverage in West Reading. Suggestions or alternative options for delivering the service focussed on infrastructure improvements to address concerns around safety and cycle theft, securing alternative funding sources, namely sponsorship and partner contributions or removing the subsidy. Several respondents in this category also suggested improved consultation for future schemes.
- 4.5 Those who were unsupportive of the proposal believed that a wide range of users would be affected including regular commuters or those using the bicycles for occasional commuting, business or leisure trips. These respondents typically highlighted the benefits of ReadyBike in terms of encouraging journeys by sustainable modes that might otherwise be undertaken by motorised vehicles. The main motivational factors for using ReadyBike included limited storage, fear of cycle theft and affordability. The responses to the request for suggestions or alternative options for delivering the service reflected those who were in support of the remove of the subsidy, including securing alternative funding and delivering improved infrastructure to encourage increased take-up of the scheme and support scheme development. Many respondents believe that the removal of the subsidy would be a backwards step for cycling and our environmental credentials.

Next Steps

- 4.6 The Council has invited expressions of interest to understand the level of interest from contractors to operate and maintain the scheme with no financial support from the Council, and two responses were received. The invitation to express interest set out that the Contractor would be expected to utilise existing cycle hire infrastructure and to operate ReadyBike as a self-financing scheme funded by commercial income or

alternative funding sources, such as but not limited to scheme sponsorship and advertising.

- 4.7 The existing contract to operate the scheme has a six month notice period, therefore it is recommended that officers provide notice to the current contractor and in parallel with the notice period undertake a full procurement exercise to secure a suitable contractor to operate the scheme beyond the existing contract. It should be noted that ReadyBike will cease to operate if a suitable contractor cannot be identified to operate the scheme commercially beyond summer 2017.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1 Budget saving proposals have been developed to target key areas to ensure we can continue to deliver our priorities and protect services alongside addressing budget challenges. These proposals will continue our focus on our service priorities whilst our budget is being reduced. The proposals will enable us to:

- Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The online consultation resulted in the submission of 175 responses in regards to the proposal to revert back to remove the ReadyBike subsidy. The consultation enabled organisations, service users and the wider community to put forward options on how to reshape the service offered by ReadyBike and to comment on who would be affected by the changes and what the likely impacts would be.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 7.2 The equality duty is relevant to the development of the Proposals for Change, including the proposal to remove the ReadyBike subsidy. Consultation responses have informed an initial Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix A) that suggests protected groups will not be affected differently than other groups.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The existing ReadyBike Contract is due to expire in June 2017 at which point we recommend that the subsidy is removed.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 As reported at Policy Committee on 18 July 2016 the proposal to remove the ReadyBike subsidy would result in budget savings of £130k in 2017/18.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Policy Committee 'Budget Proposals 2016-20 to Narrow the Budget Gap' 18 July 2016.



Provide basic details

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed

Budget Saving Proposal to Remove the ReadyBike Subsidy

Directorate: DENS

Service: Transportation & Streetcare

Name and job title of person doing the assessment

Name: Emma Baker

Job Title: Senior Transport Planner

Date of assessment: November 2016

Scope your proposal

What is the aim of your policy or new service/what changes are you proposing?

The removal of the ReadyBike subsidy was identified as a potential budget saving proposal at Policy Committee on 18th July 2016. The Committee agreed that Officers should further investigate the proposal by undertaking public consultation seeking the views of residents, users and other interested parties. The consultation was carried out between 29th August and 30th September 2016.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

No one will directly benefit from the proposal.

What outcomes does the change aim to achieve and for whom?

If approved the removal of the ReadyBike subsidy will help to bridge the funding gap from July 2017.

Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want?

There were 175 responses to the consultation regarding the proposal to remove the ReadyBike subsidy. Of the 175 respondents, around 62% live in Reading Borough with a further 13% living in the Greater Reading area. The main age profile of respondents was 35-44 years (30%) followed by 25-34 years (25%). The majority of respondents considered themselves to be service users (45%) with the second highest category being residents (43%).

Approximately 14% of respondents were supportive of the proposal to remove the subsidy. These respondents were largely of the opinion that there would be little or no impact if the scheme was to no longer continue.

The majority of respondents were unsupportive of the proposal to remove the subsidy, but were broadly supportive of us seeking sponsorship or other external funding in order to

continue operating the scheme. Those who were unsupportive of the proposal believed that a wide range of users would be affected and suggested securing alternative funding and delivering improved infrastructure to encourage increased take-up of ReadyBike and support scheme development.

Assess whether an EqlA is Relevant

How does your proposal relate to eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; promoting good community relations?

Do you have evidence or reason to believe that some (racial, disability, gender, sexuality, age and religious belief) groups may be affected differently than others? (Think about your monitoring information, research, national data/reports etc.)

Yes / No (delete as appropriate)

Is there already public concern about potentially discriminatory practices/impact or could there be? Think about your complaints, consultation, and feedback.

Yes / No (delete as appropriate)

If the answer is Yes to any of the above you need to do an Equality Impact Assessment.

If No you **MUST** complete this statement

An Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant because the proposals do not negatively impact on any one user group deemed as having protected characteristics.

Signed (completing officer)

Date November 2016

Signed (Lead Officer) Emma Baker

Date November 2016

Assess the Impact of the Proposal

Your assessment must include:

- Consultation
- Collection and Assessment of Data
- Judgement about whether the impact is negative or positive

Think about who does and doesn't use the service? Is the take up representative of the community? What do different minority groups think? (You might think your policy, project or service is accessible and addressing the needs of these groups, but asking them might give you a totally different view). Does it really meet their varied needs? Are some groups less likely to get a good service?

How do your proposals relate to other services - will your proposals have knock on effects on other services elsewhere? Are there proposals being made for other services that relate to yours and could lead to a cumulative impact?

Example: A local authority takes separate decisions to limit the eligibility criteria for community care services; increase charges for respite services; scale back its accessible housing programme; and cut concessionary travel.

Each separate decision may have a significant effect on the lives of disabled residents, and the cumulative impact of these decisions may be considerable.

This combined impact would not be apparent if decisions are considered in isolation.

Consultation

How have you consulted with or do you plan to consult with relevant groups and experts. If you haven't already completed a Consultation form do it now. The checklist helps you make sure you follow good consultation practice.

[My Home > Info Pods > Community Involvement Pod - Inside Reading Borough Council](#)

Relevant groups/experts	How were/will the views of these groups be obtained	Date when contacted
The general public, including existing ReadyBike users and local residents	A press release highlighting the consultation was published and the information shared use existing delivery partners.	Consultation was held from 29 th August to 30 th September 2016

Collect and Assess your Data

Using information from Census, residents survey data, service monitoring data, satisfaction or complaints, feedback, consultation, research, your knowledge and the knowledge of people in your team, staff groups etc. describe how the proposal could impact on each group. Include both positive and negative impacts.

(Please delete relevant ticks)

Describe how this proposal could impact on Racial groups

The proposal will not impact on racial groups.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No ~~Not sure~~

Describe how this proposal could impact on Gender/transgender (cover pregnancy and maternity, marriage)

The proposal will not impact on gender or transgender groups.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No ~~Not sure~~

Describe how this proposal could impact on Disability

The proposal will not negatively impact people with disabilities.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No ~~Not sure~~

Describe how this proposal could impact on Sexual orientation (cover civil partnership)

The proposal will not impact on sexual orientation.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No ~~Not sure~~

Describe how this proposal could impact on Age

The proposal to remove the ReadyBike subsidy will not negatively impact people of a certain age.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No ~~Not sure~~

Describe how this proposal could impact on Religious belief?

The proposal will not impact on religious beliefs.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No ~~Not sure~~

Make a Decision

If the impact is negative then you must consider whether you can legally justify it. If not you must set out how you will reduce or eliminate the impact. If you are not sure what the impact will be you MUST assume that there could be a negative

impact. You may have to do further consultation or test out your proposal and monitor the impact before full implementation.

Tick which applies (Please delete relevant ticks)

1. No negative impact identified	Go to sign off	✓
2. Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason		
You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.		
Reason		
3. Negative impact identified or uncertain		
What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?		

How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?
Feedback on the removal of the subsidy will continue to be monitored.

Signed (completing officer)	Date	November 2016
Signed (Lead Officer) Emma Baker	Date	November 2016