

Participatory Budgeting Children's Services: Summary and analysis of comments

Reducing the number of middle manager, testing the span of control

Summary of comments

- **Almost unanimous support provided support for staff remains in place.**

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

- As with other reductions that could be perceived as non-detrimental to residents this received a high level of support
- No comments were made regarding the appropriateness of 'testing the safe span of control' in Children's Services

Implement charging policy where appropriate for respite services for disabled children to ensure services are available for the most vulnerable

Summary of comments

- **Mixed range of responses with 5 supportive and 7 opposed. Key issue in support were that service should be means-tested. Those opposed focused on the importance of respite care for families and on the cost of crisis intervention should the charging policy increase incidence.**

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

The principle of those who can afford to pay being required to pay received a reasonable level of support

The mixed response may suggest this proposal is more likely to gain acceptance than some of the other proposals that were unanimously opposed

Offer only statutory minimum support to school unless school fund

Summary of comments

- **Fewer comments than most other proposals, with those expressing an opinion opposing the option**

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

Comments may suggest schools are both highly valued and perceived to be already under financial pressure. The only suggested saving related to schools sharing headteachers - which fits in general popularity of proposals for shared services, for reduction in senior staff (wage bill) and for reductions that could be perceived as non-detrimental to residents.

Review Health Care Contracts for occupational therapy and speech and language therapy

Summary of comments

- **Respondents generally opposed this, with issues being impact on vulnerable children and risk that it would cause more problems in long-term. More positive comments focussed on value for money – either through alternatives (ABA?) or outcomes based service**

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

Opposition is in line with general theme of comments opposing cuts that could affect vulnerable people although in this case there may be some willingness / opportunity to look at alternatives if they could provide value for money

Maintain focus on getting better value for money through contract management

Summary of comments

- **Almost unanimous support for this proposal (as with others that could be seen as non-detrimental to residents). Only concerns raised were over implementation rather than principle for the proposal**

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

Two issues raised on this proposal may be worth consideration as it continues to be implemented: joint contracts with other local authorities and the risk of losing the expertise of small, niche, providers in the drive for greater value for money.

Stop training subsidies to nursery providers as other local authorities have

Summary of comments

- **Respondents were generally opposed to this proposal with the key concerns being lower quality nursery provision. More positive comments focussed on possibility of providing subsidies only to charities or of reducing, rather than stopping, subsidy**

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

Opposition was predominantly based the perceived link between training and quality of nursery provision and the assumption that stopping subsidiaries would stop training. This suggests the option may become more acceptable if nurseries could be sign-posted to other training support and/or it could be demonstrated that quality could be maintained.

Targeting support to charities rather than profit-making providers would also increase acceptability and would fit in with views expressed elsewhere calling for greater use or and support for the VCS and of general support for the principle for targeting expenditure

Reduce voluntary and community sector grants

Summary of comments

- **Unanimous opposition from those who expressed a direct opinion with key concerns being that reductions to VCS would represent a false economy as costs would go up elsewhere and that more people will rely on VCS as other services are reduced.**

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

Opposition to this fits with general theme of respondents linking VCS with value for money and preventative services and therefore something that (with appropriate support) could help make savings elsewhere.

Strong reaction against this could suggest a risk a wider public opposition to this proposal although it may also reflect the demographic who attended the budget events to some extent.