

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 16/17: Empowering West Berkshire (EWB)		Andy Day - Head of Strategic Support	19 January 2016 Version 2 (Exec)
Proposal:	To cease funding EWB.		
Total budget 15/16:	£50,000	Recommended officer saving 16/17:	£50,000 (100%)
Initial proposed saving 16/17:	£50,000 (100%)	Final recommendation to Executive 16/17:	To proceed with this savings proposal, without any modifications.
Nos of responses:	There were 62 responses received to this proposal, 24 of which were from organisations. 36 of those responding had received direct support and guidance from EWB.		
Key issues raised:	<p>Those that responded to this proposal commented on the valuable support and guidance that they have received from EWB on such crucial matters as governance and training.</p> <p>Other organisations that responded commented on the expertise on offer for the voluntary and community sector in areas such as fundraising, training and governance.</p> <p>Other comments referred to the Council's priority of communities helping themselves and the need for an umbrella organisation to help them meet this challenge.</p> <p>Comments were also made about Central Government's wish to see local communities "deliver more" and become self supporting and the need for communities to be supported and trained particularly in relation to safeguarding.</p> <p>Comments were also raised about where existing and potentially new organisations would go to receive support and guidance.</p> <p>The Newbury and District Clinical Commissioning Group responded by saying that EWB provided an experienced and valuable resource in relation to building relationships with the voluntary and community sector. They also made the point that at a time when all partners were trying to engage communities EWB was a vital vehicle in supporting this approach.</p>		
Equality issues:	None were drawn out from the responses.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service	Suggestion	Council response	
	There was a consistent theme amongst those that responded	Whilst the Council would support EWB if they decided to make a modest charge for the training they provide it would not want this to be a reason why local organisations and	

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users:	which suggested that EWB should charge for some of the training that it provides to local organisations and groups. However, those responding acknowledged that this approach would not meet the modest costs of running this service.	groups decided not to take up this training at the expense of good governance and safeguarding.	
	EWB have suggested that provided that had a stable financial base for the next three years they would be prepared to take a 20% reduction in funding.	<p>It is clear that the role and value of EWB has been identified by those in the voluntary and community sector that have had to seek advice and guidance from them. EWB employ 1.5 fte. All other costs of the use of Broadway House etc are met by Greenham Common Trust. The Board are made up of volunteers and it is difficult to understand how any further costs reductions could be achieved without closing down EWB all together something which would directly impact on all parts of the Council in terms of its "communities" agenda.</p> <p>A counter proposal of an offer of a 20% cut in funding should be welcomed and accepted.</p>	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	EWB has suggested in its response that it may be able to contribute to the current costs of running this service to the tune of £10,000 a year.	The Council would welcome this approach. The Council does recognise that at present the total costs of running this service goes towards the costs of 1.5 employees. All other costs associated with the organisation are met by Greenham Common Trust. The current arrangement represents good value for money but any proposal which aims to reduce the Council's overall costs is to be supported.	
Suggestions for how others may help contribute:	Given the relative small costs of running this umbrella organisations there were no other suggestions as to how others may help.		
Officer conclusion as a result of the responses:	It is clear from those who have responded that the services provided by EWB are both valued and welcomed by local groups and organisations right across West Berkshire. The proposal by EWB to fund £10,000 of the overall cost of running this service is acknowledge, but given the council's financial challenge, is unable to be agreed to.		

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Officer recommendation as a result of responses:	Feedback has not uncovered any further issues which would prevent the council from proceeding with this proposal. It's therefore recommended to implement this proposal with no changes.		

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