

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Appendix N2b

Budget Proposals 2017/18: Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)			Head of Service: Andy Day Author: Andy Day	16 February 2017 Version 2 (Executive)
Proposal:	To reduce the funding provided to the Citizens Advice Bureau by £60,000 in 2017/18.			
Total budget 2016/17:	£199,892	Recommended officer saving 2017/18:	£60,000 (30.0%)	
Initial proposed saving 2017/18:	£60,000 (30.0%)	Final recommendation to Executive 2017/18:	To proceed with this proposal	
No. of responses:	In total, 67 responses were received. Of those that responded: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9 identified themselves as users of the service• 50 as residents of West Berkshire• 3 as council employees• 10 as Parish/Town Councils• 6 as service providers• 13 as other, including Unison A number of those responding were volunteers that supported the work of CAB.			
Key issues raised:	The main issue raised by those responding was that the proposal would impact on the vulnerable at a time when other supporting services were being closed down. A number of those responding were volunteers working for CAB and they were concerned that this proposal would leave vulnerable people without important support and advice.			
Equality issues:	Some of the CAB clients, such as those with mental health problems or those with complex needs were not captured as part of this assessment.			
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response		
	CAB could charge a small fee for their services.	This would be a matter for CAB to consider.		
	The council could consider increasing Council Tax.	This is a matter for District Councillors to consider.		
	Greater use of the website and a triage service would help to protect those in greatest need.	CAB do promote their website and a significant number of people do use this as a first point of reference.		
	Having the services available outside of the normal opening hours	This is a matter for CAB to consider.		

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	so that those at work are not negatively impacted by having to take time off.		
	CAB could reduce their overall costs by moving to more affordable accommodation.	This is a matter for CAB to consider.	
	The Council could move to a policy of “JIT” in relation to the ordering of stationery which would help to generate some funding.	The council does already operate a policy of only ordering stationery when the current supply is running very low.	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Increase Council Tax	This is a matter for District Councillors to consider.	
	CAB to reduce their overall costs by moving to more affordable accommodation.	This is a matter for CAB to consider.	
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Increase Council Tax	This is a matter for District Councillors to consider.	
	CAB to increase charges	This is a matter for CAB to consider.	
Suggestions for how others may help contribute:	There were no suggestions as to how others could help CAB given the nature of their work.		
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	The majority of comments received suggested that it would be the vulnerable that would be impacted most by this proposal. The comments received in support of the services provided by CAB are understandable, however, it must be remembered that they are not statutory services. At a time when the council has to make difficult decisions, decisions which challenge our statutory duties, it is difficult to defend a proposal that does not relate to a statutory service.		
	It is therefore recommended that the council progress with this proposal.		

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