

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 2018/19: Citizens Advice West Berkshire (CAWB)			Head of Service: Andy Day		15 February 2018	
			Day		Version 2 (Exec)	
			Author: Andy Day			
Proposal:	To reduce the annual core funding to CAWB from £120,000 to £40,000 for 2018/19					
Total budget 2017/18:	£120,000	Initial proposed saving 2018/19:	£80,000	Recommended saving 2018/19:	£40,000	
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 263 responses were received. Of those that responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 234 identified themselves as residents of West Berkshire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 as council employees • 15 as Parish/Town Councils • 1 as a District Councillor • 7 as service providers • 26 as partner organisations 					
Key issues raised:	The majority of those responding considered that the services provided by CAWB were essential to all residents of West Berkshire. 232 respondents disagreed with the proposal and seven agreed. 13 of those responding failed to confirm whether they agreed or disagreed with the proposal. Some of those responding considered that the proposal would only result in clients attending the Council to receive this support.					
Equality issues:	One of those responding suggested that the stage one Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) had not taken account those individuals with a range of learning disabilities, who did not consider themselves to have a disability.					
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response				
	Those responding who agreed with the proposal suggested that there were other charities (Churches Against Poverty) and organisations which could provide this support if CAWB was unable to do so.	Whilst there may be other organisations that could provide some of the services that CAWB do, it is unlikely that any alternative services will be as comprehensive as those provided by CAWB.				

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	A number of respondents suggested that Council Tax should rise to mitigate the need to reduce funding to CAWB.	This proposal would be for Full Council to agree.	
	One respondent suggested that the Council should add 5 pence to the proposed charge for green waste. This would again mitigate the need to reduce the funding provided to CAWB.	This proposal would be for Full Council to agree.	
	One respondent questioned whether the Council could provide this service in house.	The Council would not have the capacity or expertise at this stage to provide the full range of services that CAWB do at present.	
	One respondent suggested that CAWB should review their full time staffing compliment to see whether they could reduce this as a means of mitigating the proposed reduction.	This is a matter for CAWB.	
	Some of those responding suggested that the proposed reduction in funding should be phased over a slightly longer timeframe.	This is a matter for Full Council to consider.	

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Alternative options for applying the saving in this are	Suggestion	Council response
	No alternative options were suggested.	N/A
Suggestions for income generation:	Suggestion	Council response
	Some of those responding suggested that CAWB should introduce a small charge for the services that they provide.	This is a matter for CAWB.
Suggestions for how others may help contribute:	Suggestion	Council response
	A small number of respondents suggested that other Charities (e.g.: Churches Against Poverty) may be able to provide advice and support to some of those clients currently deferring to CAWB.	This would be for individual clients to determine.
Conclusion and recommendation:	<p>It is clear from the consultation that the public both respect and value the support that CAWB provide to some of the most vulnerable in our society, although the services they provide are available to all, not just the vulnerable. It is accepted that CAWB has received significant budget reductions over the last three years. CAWB are now suggesting that if the proposal to reduce their core funding to £40,000 proceeds then they will have to close down their operations, which could leave West Berkshire residents without a one stop shop for advice and support.</p> <p>Over the last five years regular dialogue has occurred between the Council and CAWB about the Council's difficult financial situation. Various alternative models have been discussed which CAWB all with the aim of them becoming less reliant on Council funding. Some of these discussions have involved opportunities for securing private sector funding (as in the case of Portsmouth CAB) through to a potential merger with other neighbouring CAB's. However, CAWB are still highly dependent on the Council's funding at present, despite attracting some funding from Greenham Common Trust, Thatcham Town Council and Newbury Town Council.</p> <p>There could be opportunities through the National Lottery to secure funding for the type of services that CAWB</p>	

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provide however the case has been made that because of the affluence of the West Berkshire area the criteria for many of these funding streams means that the these opportunities are limited.

It is clear from the responses that CAWB provide much needed services for some of our most vulnerable. The roll out of Universal Credit from December 2017 may also require support from CAWB particularly where cases involve debt.

The Council would wish to see CAWB reduce further some of its overheads, seek other sources of funding and explore possible mergers with other areas if this option provides a more sustainable business model for the future. The Council would also like further benchmarking undertaken with other CABs in order to better understand the costs of the service and to ensure that CAWB is as efficient as possible going forward.

It is recommended that the proposal to reduce the core funding to CAWB from £120,000 to £40,000 be not progressed.

It is however recommended that the core funding to CAWB be reduced by £40,000 leaving a core grant from the Council of £80,000. Along with funding from Adult Social Care this would mean that the Council provide over £100,000 in 2019/20. In addition, the Council also provides CAWB with 67 season ticket car parking passes in kind, the value of which is £77,050 a year. The passes recognise the value that volunteers add to the work of CAWB although it is acknowledged that some of the season tickets are seldom used and in some cases are not used at all. This situation will be kept under review.