

Equality Impact Assessment – Stage Two

<p>What is the decision Executive is being asked to make?</p> <p>Please add a summary of relevant legislation and whether the proposed decision conflicts with any of the Council's key strategic priorities</p>	<p>To reduce the Council's overall funding grant of £120,000 to the CAB to £40,000.</p> <p>This is not a statutory service and the funding grant that WBC makes available to CAWB is made on a discretionary basis. However, the reduction in funding will obviously mean a change to existing practice. In fact CAWB have suggested that a reduction of the quantum proposed would result in their operation being closed which would mean that a significant and valuable source of advice and support to the residents of West Berkshire would be lost.</p> <p>Nationally the picture is mixed in relation to Local Government funding CAWBs. In Slough and Portsmouth funding has been withdrawn completely. In Portsmouth funding is now provided by the private sector and other partners.</p> <p>Currently the services provided by CAWB are still free to all at the point of access and are available to all residents. Whilst there are other sources of advice and support the proposal, if approved, would have the effect of reducing this support and, if CAWB were to close, then this could have a significant impact on the vulnerable.</p> <p>Although CAWB has a very good national website this does mean that people in need have or being capable of navigating the internet.</p>
Budget Holder for item being assessed:	Andy Day, Head of Strategic Support
Name of assessor:	Andy Day
Name of Service & Directorate	Strategic Support, Resources Directorate
Date of assessment:	17 January 2017
Date Stage 1 EIA completed:	13 October 2016

STEP 1 – Scoping the Equality Impact Assessment

1. What data, research and other evidence or information is available which will be relevant to this Equality Analysis? Please tick all that apply.			
Service Targets		Performance Targets	
User Satisfaction		Service Take-up	X
Workforce Monitoring		Press Coverage	

Complaints & Comments		Census Data	
Information from Trade Union		Community Intelligence	
Previous Equality Impact Analysis		Staff Survey	
Public Consultation		Other (please specify)	X

2. Please summarise the findings from the available evidence for the areas you have ticked above.

Quarterly meetings with the Chief Executive of CAWB, together with performance data provided by them, shows that CAWB see a significant number of clients each year despite the website acting as a good triage service in the first instance.

The responses to previous consultations has shown that although the services provided by CAWB are valued there was an understanding of the Council's difficult and challenging financial situation. However, the results of this consultation, particularly in relation to CAWB suggesting that if the proposal was to proceed then CAWB would have to close their operations, has generated a significant number of responses.

It is also clear from the recent consultation and the large number of responses received that the vulnerable would be impacted by the closure of the CAWB operation. CAWB currently provide a range of advice and support across a number of disciplines.

3. If you have identified any gaps in the evidence provided above, please detail what additional research or data is required to fill these gaps? Have you considered commissioning new data or research eg a needs assessment?

If 'No' please proceed to Step 2.

No

STEP 2 – Involvement and Consultation

1. Please outline below how the findings from the evidence summarised above when broken down, will affect people with the 9 protected characteristics.	
Target Groups	Describe the type of evidence used, with a brief summary of the responses gained and links to relevant documents
Age – relates to all ages	The feedback received from CAWB as part of the consultation suggests that they would have to close their operation if this proposal was to proceed and so current and future clients would have to seek support and advice from other organisations.
Disability - applies to a range of people that have a condition (physical or mental) which has a significant and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out 'normal' day-to-day activities. This protection also applies to people that have been diagnosed with a progressive illness such as HIV or cancer.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other. Other organisations would need to be used by clients seeking support and advice.
Gender reassignment - definition has been expanded to include people who chose to live in the opposite gender to the gender assigned to them at birth by removing the previously legal requirement for them to undergo medical supervision.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other. Other organisations would need to be used by clients seeking support and advice.
Marriage and Civil partnership – protects employees who are married or in a civil partnership against discrimination. Single people are not protected.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other. Other organisations would need to be used by clients seeking support and advice.
Pregnancy and Maternity - protects against discrimination. With regard to employment, the woman is protected during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. It is also unlawful to discriminate against women breastfeeding in a public place	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other. Other organisations would need to be used by clients seeking support and advice.

Race - includes colour, caste, ethnic / national origin or nationality.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other. Other organisations would need to be used by clients seeking support and advice.
Religion and Belief - covers any religion, religious or non-religious beliefs. Also includes philosophical belief or non-belief. To be protected, a belief must satisfy various criteria, including that it is a weighty and substantial aspect of human life and behaviour.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other. Other organisations would need to be used by clients seeking support and advice.
Sex - applies to male or female.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other. Other organisations would need to be used by clients seeking support and advice.
Sexual Orientation - protects lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and heterosexual people.	There is no evidence to indicate that there will be a greater impact on this group than on any other. Other organisations would need to be used by clients seeking support and advice.

2. Who are the main stakeholders (eg service users, staff etc) and what are their requirements?

Users of the CAWB service can come from every walk of life and the services provided are universal. CAWB also provides a range of financial and benefits advice. This advice is often seen as crucial by the clients as many of those seeking their help are experiencing significant financial difficulties.

Given the financial difficulties of the Council, CAB has been transitioning their services to the extent that they have a website as a first port of call for those in need. This means that some of the clients that were seen in the past are now able to self serve.

3. How will this item affect the stakeholders identified above?

It is clear that the closure of CAWB would mean that clients may potentially have to see several other organisations (including the Council) in order to resolve their issues rather than the one stop shop that CAWB currently provide.

STEP 3 – Assessing Impact and Strengthening the Policy

What have you assessed the impact as being? If there are potential adverse or differential impact on protected groups, what are the measures you will take to mitigate against such impact. Is there any opportunity to promote equality and good relations?

The implication of this proposal if CAWB were to close would not mean that any one protected group would be adversely impacted any more than any other group. Clients, in general, would have to seek alternative organisations for support and advice and it may be that several organisations would have to be contacted in order to resolve an individual's issues rather than one organisations such as CAWB at present. However support is available.

STEP 4 – Procurement and Partnerships

Is this item due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

No

If 'yes', will there be any additional requirements placed on the contractor? Have you done any work already to include equality considerations into the contract? You should set out how you will make sure that any partner you work with complies with equality legislation.

N/A

STEP 5 – Making a Decision

Summarise your findings and make a clear statement of the recommendation being made as a result of the assessment. This will need to take into account whether the Council will still meet its responsibilities under the Public sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act), which states:-

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:-

- (i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;***
- (ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, in particular the need to:-***
 - (a) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;***
 - (b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;***
- (iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.***

It is clear that of those that have responded to the consultation the overwhelming majority do not support the proposal. Those that have responded value the advice and support offered by CAWB. The implications of proceeding with this proposal could result in the closure of CAWB and whilst other organisations exist which could provide some advice and support it is not clear whether this support and advice would be as comprehensive as that provided by CAWB. It is also unclear whether other organisations could provide a one stop shop of advice and support as CAWB currently do.

Although the vulnerable could be impacted by this proposal the services provided by CAWB are available to all.

Having looked at the responses from successive consultations and notwithstanding the possible closure of CAWB officers it is considered that this proposal would not impact any more on any one of the protected groups but would impact on all those people requiring advice and support across a range of issues.

STEP 6 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

Once the change has taken place, how will you monitor the impact on the 9 protected characteristics?

If this proposal were to proceed and CAWB close then the only way of monitoring the impact of this proposal would be to review the number of people visiting the Council for benefits and housing advice who would otherwise of gone direct to CAWB.

STEP 7 – Action Plan

	Actions	Target Date	Responsible Person
Involvement & consultation	N/A	-	-
Data collection	N/A	-	-
Assessing impact	N/A	-	-
Procurement & partnership	N/A	-	-
Monitoring, evaluation and reviewing	To monitor the increase in the number of people who seek benefits and housing advice from the Council should CAWB close.	Quarterly	Andy Day

STEP 8 – Sign Off

The policy, strategy or function has been fully assessed in relation to its potential effects on equality and all relevant concerns have been addressed.

Contributors to the Assessment

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Job Title: Head of Strategic Support

Date: 12 January 2018

Head of Service (sign off)

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Job Title: Head of Strategic Support

Date: 12 January 2018