

EXECUTIVE BOARD
23rd OCTOBER 2017

**2017/18 BUDGET/EFFICIENCIES ON CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
CARMARTHENSHERE**

Purpose:

Update on the implications of implementing the 2017/18 budget efficiencies on the Carmarthenshire Citizens Advice Bureau as approved by council on the 22nd February 2017.

Recommendations / key decisions required:

To approve the reversal of the decision to cut 35k in 17/18 and request a review of the budget efficiencies proposals for the Council's Budget Strategy 2018/19.

Reasons:

The purpose of this report is to highlight the current position and associated impacts should the Council implement the agreed 2017/18 budget efficiencies for Carmarthenshire Citizens Advice Bureau in 2017/18.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted

No.

Exec Board Decision Required	Yes
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Council Decision Required	NO
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EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Cllr David Jenkins

Directorate Resources Name of Head of Service: Chris Moore Report Author: John Wilson	Designations: Director Of Corporate Services Resources Community Regeneration Manager	Tel Nos. E Mail Addresses: Cmoore@carmarthenshire.gov.uk jwilson@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE BOARD

23/10/17

2017/18 BUDGET/EFFICIENCIES ON CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU CARMARTHENSHIRE

1. Background

The Carmarthenshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CABs) has historically received grant funding support from the authority through the form of a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

The funding for period 2016/17 was for £162,510. In the beginning of the financial year the budget sat within the Department for Communities Services' Housing and Public Protection.

The budget responsibility for Citizens Advice Bureau was transferred from Public Protection to Chief Executive's Regeneration and Policy Division in April 2017.

As part of the Authorities budget efficiency programme 17/18, an original proposal was put forward by Housing and Public Protection, to withdraw funding to the Carmarthenshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CABs). This was assessed and it was felt that the impact would be too great for the organisation to withstand financially in one year.

It was agreed at Full Council on 22nd February 2017 to reduce funding by £35k per annum for 2017/18 and for the following future three years, the first year reduction being 17/18.

The purpose of this report is to highlight the current implications and immediate impact to CABs, should the implementation of these proposals go ahead for the current 2017/18.

2. Impact

The grant funding support given to CABs makes up the vast majority percentage of the organisation's core funding and this is seen as important leverage to draw in other additional external finance.

A budget reduction of £90k was implemented by the Authority in the previous year 2016/17 by Public Protection and any further reduction in grant funding at this time would have severe implications on maintaining the current level of service. Consultation with the service provider has highlighted, if the intended reductions of £35k are implemented for 2017/18 then this would have immediate effect on the service in particular reduced staffing with enforced redundancy, closure or reduction in opening hours and a reduced availability of client debt and benefit support.

Therefore the service provider has asked for a reconsideration to the implementation of these financial reductions due to the short time period of implementation and to allow for a full considered consultation to be undertaken with the service provider.

Economic Development have engaged with the CABs and has referred these concerns back to the Director of Corporate Services of the subsequent impact on the downsizing and subsequent future service capability of the organisation post implementation of the financial

reduction for 17/18. It is a recommendation to defer the 17/18 reduction in funding whilst a full consultation is undertaken with the service provider and to review the budget efficiencies for 18/19.

Officers will use the next few months to review the current Service Level Agreement with CABS alongside the wider provision of debt and benefit advice in the County. The Councils review will consider how any future funding relationship with CABS will look. The findings of the review will be reported back to Executive Board for future consideration and discussion regarding future funding of CABS

This report seeks Executive Board approval to postpone the 17/18 efficiency target and a further review of the Budget Efficiencies be undertaken for 2018/19.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED	No
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IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: Chris Moore

Director of Corporate Services

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
Yes	Yes	Yes	NONE	Yes	NONE	NONE

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

Equalities and Impacts Assessment needed in preparation for any budget efficiencies 2017/18 to be implemented.

Legal

Within the Equalities Act 2010, statutory requirement to undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment. Public bodies have a statutory duty to pay 'due regard' be demonstrated in the decision making process.

The Service Manager responsible for the relevant new or revised policies, functions, procedures and financial decisions must undertake, at least, an initial EIA and where relevant a detailed Equality Impact Assessment; EIA must be attached as background paper with reports to Executive and Scrutiny . The duties are legal obligations. Failure to meet the duties may result in authorities being exposed to legal challenge.

Finance

2017/18 Budget Efficiencies 35k for 2017/18 and for future ongoing years to be deferred and reviewed as part of the 2018/19 Budget Efficiencies.

Risk Management Issues

Within the Equalities Act 2010, statutory requirement to undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment. Public bodies have a statutory duty to pay 'due regard' be demonstrated in the decision making process. A judicial challenge against the Authority is likely by the CABs organisation if the 2017/18 Budget Efficiencies are implemented within 2017/18.

Consultations

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Chris Moore **Job Title** Director of Corporate Services

1. Scrutiny Committee – N/A
2. Local Member(s) - N/A
3. Community / Town Council - N/A
4. Relevant Partners – N/A
5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations –
Roger Edmunds Trading Standards Services Manager - Public Protection

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information

List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Council Meeting 22 nd February 2017		Minutes. Decision on Voluntary Sector Funding point 10.1.1: http://democracy.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/documents/g633/Printed%20minutes%2022nd-Feb-2017%2010.00%20County%20Council.pdf?T=1