

Budget Proposals 2014/15 and 2015/16: Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

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Business Unit:	Housing Partnership/ Voluntary Sector	Directorate:	Children's Services
Executive Lead(s):	Cllr Ken Pritchard	Date:	6th February 2014

The council and its partners are facing a significant challenge in the savings it needs to make over the next couple of years. This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been developed as a tool to enable business units to fully consider the impact of their proposals on the community. As a council we need to ensure that we are able to deliver the savings that we need to make while mitigating against any negative or adverse impacts on particular groups across our communities.

This EIA will evidence that the Council have fully considered the impact of the proposed changes and has carried out appropriate consultation on those changes with the key stakeholders. This EIA and the evidence provided within it will allow Councillors to make informed decisions as part of the decision-making process regarding the council's budget.

Executive Lead / Head Sign off:

Executive Lead(s)	Ken Pritchard	Executive Head:	Richard Williams
Date:	6th February 2014	Date:	6th February 2014

Summary from Overall Budget Proposals:

Proposals – Outline	Savings for 2014/15 and 2015/16		Implementation Cost <i>Include brief outline + year incurred</i>	Delivery <i>When will this proposal realise income / savings</i>	Risks / impact of proposals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Potential risks</i> • <i>Impact on community</i> • <i>Knock on impact to other agencies</i> • <i>If statutory service please state relevant legislation section and Act together with any statutory guidance issued.</i> 	Type of decision		
	Income £ 000's	Budget reduction £ 000's				Internal	Minor	Major
Reduction of 50% to the grant given to the Citizen Advice Bureau		£75,000	Nil	01.04.14	<p>The Citizens Advice Bureau may not be able to deliver as many advice sessions to their client base. This proposal may increase the demand across other services.</p> <p>The potential impact of this proposal will be explored through consultation. An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken in relation to this proposal.</p>			X

Section 1: Purpose of the proposal/strategy/decision

No	Question	Details
1.	<p>Clearly set out the proposal and what is the intended outcome.</p>	<p>Torbay Council currently has a 12 month extension (until 31st March 2014) to an original three year Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). This is as a result of the Mayor's proposal at overview and scrutiny board on 24th January 2013 to maintain the CAB funding at the same level in 2013/14.</p> <p>It is proposed to reduce the level of grant funding by £75,000 to £75,100 with effect from 1st April 2014. In line with statutory guidance, and the SLA, Torbay Council is required to give three months notice of any reduction in grant.</p> <p>CAB provided their Business and Development plan 2013 - 2016 as requested by the Mayor. Objectives for 2013/14 are to maintain existing funding sources for core service .</p>
2.	<p>Who is intended to benefit / who will be affected?</p>	<p>The CAB service is a charity that provides free advice and is available to all residents across Torbay.</p> <p>A reduction in grant funding may affect the future sustainability of the service.</p> <p>The majority of enquiries dealt with by the CAB are related to benefit and debt advice. Changes to the Incapacity Benefit have led to an increase in assistance with medical reviews over the past months, with a need to take on three additional staff.</p> <p>Reduced capacity to the service could result in increased waiting times/ delays for advice.</p>

Section 2: Equalities, Consultation and Engagement

Torbay Council has a moral obligation as well as a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, promote good relations and advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

The **Equalities, Consultation and Engagement** section ensures that, as a council, we take into account the Public Sector Equality Duty at an early stage and provide evidence to ensure that we fully consider the impact of our decisions/proposals on the Torbay community.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

No	Question	Details
3.	Have you considered the available evidence?	<p>The CAB service is available to all residents across Torbay – as a result of the reduction in grant funding the capacity to deliver the service could result in increased waiting times/delays for advice.</p> <p>The Local Authority is planning to produce a report that identifies Financial Inclusion for the residents (vulnerable groups) in Torbay. This will inform us of potential support gaps. Partner provision will be part of this analysis with wider work planned with partners to commence early January as part of the Council’s strategic approach to Welfare Reform. It is still too early to recognise any specific impacts relative to the changes to date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2012/13 CAB dealt with 12,963 contacts from people seeking advice • 28,114 issues for these people across a wide range of issues affecting their lives, a 16% increase over the previous year. • In 2012/13 CAB helped the people of Torbay (many of whom are the poorest and most vulnerable) increase their incomes by over £1.7 million which not only enhanced the lives of recipients but provided a substantial inflow of resources into Torbay with consequent benefits to the local economy • In 2012/13 CAB helped clients manage over £11 million worth of debt and through this work helped to alleviate the social costs to the wider community resulting from debt including homelessness, family break up, child poverty and mental illness • We have 53 volunteers from across the social and economic spectrum of our Torbay communities working within the service and were planning to train a further 10 people next year <p>Earlier this year CAB received project partnership funding of £347,000 from Advice Services Transition Fund, - Big Lottery & Cabinet Office to be spent over 2 years to develop an accessible, sustainable quality information and advice service, designed to meet the needs of the people of Torbay.</p> <p>The delivery model is specifically looking at promoting self help, prevention and early intervention in social welfare law to empower the client and manage increased demand in the face of reduced advice capacity (i.e legal aid cuts).</p>

No	Question	Details
		<p>It is planned to achieve this by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an online social welfare law advice portal • Development of a Telephone advice line – single number access • Referral system – linked to on line advice portal/telephone service. <p>Local providers/ voluntary sector organisations and Commissioners involved and interested in the broader development and future of Information, Advice and Advocacy services have recently met to consider how they might build on/ link into this new funding provision. There is recognition from all partners that an Information, Advice and Advocacy Strategy for Torbay is needed to ensure appropriate continued quality provision, and setting up a steering group and completion of a scoping exercise would be a logical first step. The current intention is to take a proposal to the Health and Well Being Board, hopefully later this year and produce a Strategy by April 2014.</p>
4.	<p>How have you consulted on the proposal?</p>	<p>Consultation on this proposal is now complete following the announcement of the Mayor’s draft budget proposals in November 2013. Targeted consultation has taken place with the following:</p> <p>Torbay CAB General public The newly formed Information, Advice and Advocacy – supported by CDT steering group (see above) To ensure that all potential future users of this service are given the opportunity to have their say, information along with a survey will be made available online and in paper as part of the wider consultation on the Mayor’s budget.</p> <p>See Appendix 1 for a copy of the consultation report.</p>
5.	<p>Outline the key findings</p>	<p>Strong public support to maintain the CAB service, and not to reduce funding at the 50 % cut proposed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers like the ability to receive face to face advice • Customers recognise and trust the brand • Customers feel that Welfare reform will lead to an increase demand and access to specifically debt and welfare advice that is affordable. <p>CAB has seen a 4% increase in enquiries 12/13</p> <p>Key future challenges outlined by the CAB</p>

No	Question	Details
		<p>Fundamental reform of the welfare benefit system continues to mean people need help and advice to understand the changes and learn how to manage on an often significantly reduced income i.e. financial capability /debt/ benefit/ income maximisation advice. Government cuts to legal aid for welfare benefit advice and the withdrawal of services from local firms of solicitors has placed increased pressure on our service</p> <p>Specialist money advice and financial capability services will have increased importance as more people struggle with reduced living standards and debt. Government cuts to debt advice services in April 2013 have created a major challenge in coping with increased demand as we continue to help people avoid the pitfalls of debt. Integrated debt and financial capability services will continue to be developed and introduced to cope with the increased demand in face of reduced debt advice capacity</p>
6.	What amendments may be required as a result of the consultation?	<p>CAB have proposed that a £30,000 reduction covering the next 2 years is a more appropriate level to enable continuation of the Service and more time to identify alternative funding/ delivery options.</p> <p>Children's Services are not taking these recommendations forward</p> <p>Councillors to make final decision on any changes to proposed saving.</p>

Positive and Negative Equality Impacts

No	Question	Details		
7.	Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact
	Older or younger people		CAB Client profile 12/13: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 43% of clients are over 50 which increases to 59% for our GP outreach and home visiting service 15% of clients were retired 	
	People with caring responsibilities			

No	Question	Details	
	People with a disability		CAB Client profile 12/13: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42% of clients had a disability or health problems. This increases to 64% for our GP outreaches and home visiting service
	Women or men		CAB Client profile 12/13: 56% female, 44% male
	People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME)		CAB Client profile 12/13: 8% BME
	Religion or belief (including lack of belief)		
	People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual		
	People who are transgendered		
	People who are in a marriage or civil partnership		
	Women who are pregnant / on maternity leave		
	Socio-economic impacts (Including impact on child poverty issues and deprivation)		CAB Client profile 12/13: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21% of clients were unemployed • 50% of client's had an income below £600pcm(less than £19.72 per day) • 26% of clients had an income below £400pcm(less than £13.15 per day)
	Public Health impacts (How will your proposal impact on the general health of the population of Torbay)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42% of clients had a disability or health problems. This increases to 64% for our GP outreaches and home visiting service

No	Question	Details
8a.	Cumulative Impacts – Council wide (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	Information and Advice provided within the Local Authority is under increasing demand and with proposals to cut Customer Services and Housing Options, there is likely to be a need to increase capacity within the Community and Voluntary Sector.
8b.	Cumulative Impacts – Other public services (proposed changes elsewhere which might worsen the impacts identified above)	As above

Section 3: Mitigating action

No	Action	Details
9.	Summarise any negative impacts and how these will be managed?	<p>The IAA steering group and the Strategic Welfare Reform group, will facilitate a piece of work that scopes the current provision of Information, advice and advocacy Services across Torbay. This will identify gaps that will inform future Community and Voluntary Sector provision, specific Community help and any future commissioning of Services, depending on funding availability.</p> <p>A separate piece of analysis is also planned to map the individual journey for the most vulnerable customers e.g mental health needs to mitigate the impacts of funding cuts to a range current support services.</p> <p>In light of the views expressed in the consultation that if given additional time there may be opportunities to access different funding streams to enable the service to continue, the Council is now proposing the establishment of a one off transitional fund to the value of £45,000, which will be provided to the service in 2014/15. This transitional fund is designed to provide the service with sufficient time to explore opportunities to enable the service to continue in the future with less Council funding than is currently provided.</p>

Section 4: Monitoring

No	Action	Details
10.	Outline plans to monitor the actual impact of your proposals	Strategic Welfare reform group (includes partners/organisations from the Community and Voluntary Sector) will continue to monitor impact of changes. Regular meetings with the CAB

Section 5: Recommended course of action –

No	Action	Outcome	Tick ✓	Reasons/justification for recommended action
11.	State a recommended course of action	Outcome 1: No major change required - EIA <i>has not identified any potential for adverse impact in relation to equalities and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken</i>	✓	Access to a range of face to face advice services are available in Torbay and on – line/ telephone. These include (examples , and not the complete list) Connections, Libraries, Housing Options, Social Housing Partners, Age UK, Homemaker, Church Organisations and other Community and Voluntary sector organisations. Torbay Councils Family information Community Directory and National help lines for Debt advice are examples . In light of the views expressed in the consultation that if given additional time there may be opportunities to access different funding streams to enable the service to continue, the Council is now proposing the establishment of a one off transitional fund in the value of £45,000, which will be provided to the service in 2014/15. This transitional fund is designed to provide the service with sufficient time to explore opportunities to enable the service to continue for a future with less Council funding than is currently provided
		Outcome 2: Adjustments to remove barriers – <i>Action to remove the barriers identified in relation to equalities have been taken or actions identified to better promote equality</i>		

		Outcome 3: Continue with proposal - Despite having identified some <u>potential</u> for adverse impact / missed opportunities in relation to equalities or to promote equality. Full justification required, especially in relation to equalities, in line with the duty to have 'due regard'.		
		Outcome 4: Stop and rethink – EIA has identified actual or potential unlawful discrimination in relation to equalities or adverse impact has been identified		

Appendix 1

Consultation Data: Reduction in the Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB) Grant

1. Members of the Public and the Citizen's Advice Bureau

1.1 Methodology

Local Authority/ Citizen Advice Bureau Meeting – The Strategic Housing Manager met with the CAB Manager and Trustee to outline the proposed budget savings and discuss the potential impact on service users and delivery.

Written Representation - Written summary response to the savings proposal alternative savings proposal, including Key Service Outcomes document provided by CAB . (refer to separate document)

Public Consultation response – summary below

1.2 Results

Q6e) Reduce the grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau

It is proposed to reduce the grant given to the Citizens Advice Bureau by 50%. This is expected to save £75,000 over two years.

Do you support this proposal?	Number	Percent
Yes	133	32.5
No	242	59.2
No response	34	8.3
Total	409	100.0

Category	Examples of comments – where respondents said ‘No’ above
Will impact on vulnerable people	<p><i>“an important source of independent advice and because of the support they give vulnerable people”</i></p> <p><i>“Citizen advice bureaus are used by the most vulnerable part of the society.”</i></p>
Essential free, impartial advice	<p><i>“It is very important that people have a place that they know to contact in case of any legal or benefit problems - people need the debt management service as well”</i></p> <p><i>“This is the only place in the Bay where people with major problems, housing, finance etc can get free qualified advice and help”</i></p> <p><i>“Cutting the CAB budget and cutting Housing Options budget makes no sense at a time when there is an increasing need for more welfare benefit, debt, and housing advice to prevent homelessness.”</i></p>

Category	Examples of comments – where respondents said ‘No’ above
	<i>“Citizens Advice provide a first class service to people who cannot afford legal advice. Coupled with the drastic reduction in legal aid funding this proposal will deny people the fundamental right to equality before the law.”</i>
No alternative service	<i>“Use of the CAB has increased dramatically over recent years, that service is not available elsewhere”</i> <i>“There is no alternative service for people to go for advice and information.”</i>
Increased demand	<i>“The organisation will become more needed as cuts bite...”</i> <i>“Help and guidance will be needed more than ever in these hard times”</i>

CAB Consultation response

“Impact of proposed cuts”

As with Citizens Advice Bureaux throughout the country, the Local Authority grant provides funding for our core service which is the foundation on which the service is built.

A 50% cut (£75,000) would mean the bureau’s operations would have to be drastically cut making the service unsustainable.

The cut could mean:-

- Closing the Brixham service
- Closing the Torquay Debt Unit
- Providing a vastly reduced service at Paignton to deliver drop in advice sessions and some appointments.
- Closing the telephone advice service
- End of standby supervision so the Paignton bureau will have to close on days when the Manager is sick or on leave
- No training capacity

- The strategic management of the bureau would no longer be possible. There would be no opportunity to network, develop partnerships and raise extra funding for advice projects for the benefit of the local community. It would also mean it would be impossible to meet statutory governance requirements which are essential for our charity to continue operating.
- Ending all current time limited ring fenced projects funded from successful bids as the organisation could not prove financial sustainability to funders or have the necessary strategic management to be able to bid for continuation funding.

After taking account of fixed running costs we would be left with only one part time member of staff to manage and supervise the service undertaking both a strategic and operational role. We would no longer be financially resilient or have the resources to meet the legal and governance requirements for running a charity.

CAB Proposal

We would therefore ask that the proposal that would make our bureau unsustainable is withdrawn. In order for us to continue to meet the growing advice needs of the people of Torbay we would ask that the cut is reduced to £30,000 covering the two years 2014/15 and 2015/16 (i.e. the core grant reducing from £150,100 to £120,100 in each of the two years). This would enable the bureau to remain sustainable and provide us with the opportunity to explore more resilient, sustainable and enterprising advice models for the provision of social welfare law services to meet the needs of the Torbay Community.”