

Citizens Advice Woking and Woking Borough Council Supplement to Citizens Advice Woking Business and Development Plan 2018 - 21

Introduction and Aims

As a result of feedback from the Leader of Woking Borough Council (WBC) and through further discussion with the President and Chair of Citizens Advice Woking (CAW) this Action Plan (the Plan) has been produced to expand the existing CAW Business and Development Plan 2018 - 2021 (BDP). The overall aims we seek to achieve:

- To further strengthen relationships between CAW and WBC and to detail plans about how it will work more effectively with Officers and Members
- Engage WBC with both the current and future Business Planning of CAW
- Create mutual opportunities to share knowledge about our advice and campaign work (for example the Sheerwater Regeneration Project)
- Report quarterly on the work, usage and value of the services provided by CAW
- Provide an effective means to achieve the additional grant shortfall of £38,000 and better inform future grant applications

As CAW already has a comprehensive BDP including existing relevant action areas this additional Plan has been produced to align with that existing framework and should be read in conjunction with CAW's BDP.

CAW BDP Highlights

The statement of purpose, aims and development of CAW includes these relevant areas and these are worth stressing in the context of the Plan and the discussions surrounding the Grant Application for 2019/20:

- CAW is committed to providing free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to the residents of Woking and those who work in the Borough, on their rights and responsibilities as well as to improve on the policies and practices that affect their lives
- CAW is able to provide this independent advice service with the support of its main funder, WBC
- CAW's service is impartial and open to everybody, irrespective of ability, age, gender, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and social or economic status

- CAW needs to expand its service to make sure it's accessible to anyone who needs it by offering additional outreach sessions in those areas of the Borough where a higher percentage of residents are facing financial difficulties and expanding home visits to those unable to travel or who may be vulnerable in some way
- Core funding levels from Woking B.C. must be sustained but we do not expect this to cover all of our operating costs and ways of raising additional funding is a priority

Supporting WBC Vision and Values

The overall aims and values of CAW align strongly to those of WBC including:

- achieving things and looking to improve; having a forward-thinking attitude; building on what is good today, and planning and working for the future
- housing as a priority area by the provision of housing caseworkers and Court Desk caseworkers to reduce rent arrears and help prevent homelessness
- providing welfare benefit and employment advice to the many people who both live and work in the Borough to assure their economic livelihoods and make Woking an attractive place to work
- to help improve the quality of life and mental wellbeing of the many residents who may struggle to find alternative means of advice and support

Conclusion

In order to decide what to include in the Action Plan we collected data on the numbers and types of contact with the various departments of WBC for 17 working days. The results of this are found at Appendix Two. This then helped us to produce an overall plan to ensure we achieved the aim of more effective working with the Officers and Members and WBC. This plan is found at Appendix One.

Charles Croker
Chair

Key

CAW Business and Development Plan 2018 – 2021

Action Plan

Appendix One – Relevant Sections of CAW’s BDP and the Action Plan

CAW Business and Development Plan		
D. Resources Strategy		
i) Funding		
Objective	Activities	Achievement to date
1. To strengthen the partnership with CAW’s main funder, Woking B.C, to enable delivery of the current service	1.1 Report quarterly on outcomes achieved by delivery of the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Trustee Board Minutes and CEO Report submitted to Democratic Services Manager (every 2 months for 2018 – 19) ❖ CAW 2017 – 18 Annual Report circulated to all WBC members and senior Officers in November 2018 ❖ All WBC Members and Senior Officers invited to attend AGM in December 2018 ❖ WBC Member Observers invited to every Trustee Board Meeting, have all documents circulated with an open invitation to attend the CAW office at any time
Action Plan (the Plan)		
Proposed Activity	By Whom	Timescale
1.2 CAW to distribute Trustee Board Meeting Minutes and CEO Report to wider distribution list within WBC.	Leader of Council and WBC Chief Executive Officer to provide list to CAW CEO	List to be provided as soon as practical and before 1 st April 2019
1.3 CAW Chair and Leader of Council to meet every Quarter to discuss Trustee Board Meeting Minutes and CEO Report and other mutual topics	Chair CAW Leader of Council	Dates and times of Meetings to be mutually agreed before 1 st April 2019
1.4 CAW CEO to attend pre full WBC meeting to give a presentation on the work CAW is doing.	CAW CEO	CAW CEO to liaise with the Officer responsible for arranging the pre full WBC meeting
1.5 CAW CEO to be invited by WBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee once every 12 months to report on delivery of service	Chair O & S Committee CAW CEO	Date to be agreed in advance of timetable being set for O & S Committee in 2019/20

1.6 WBC Executive Committee to be invited to attend one or more advice sessions and to meet paid caseworkers to show how the service is delivered	CAW CEO to arrange with Executive Committee	Invitations to be sent by end of January 2019
1.7 To invite an Officer from one of the main departments (including from New Vision Homes) to attend an advice session and to meet with the relevant paid caseworkers to discuss ways of working together	CAW CEO to arrange with Officers and New Vision Homes team	Invitations to be sent by end of January 2019
CAW Business and Development Plan		
D. Resources Strategy		
ii) People		
Objective	Activities	Achievement to Date
2. To implement a plan for the training requirements of all paid staff and volunteers	2.1 Write Workplace Development Plan	Full details of all training courses for all volunteers and paid staff are recorded. Main training courses this year have been for Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Universal Credit, Mental Health and ASK Re Programme
Action Plan (the Plan)		
Proposed Activity	By Whom	Timescale
2.2 Increase the knowledge of all paid staff and volunteers of key WBC strategic priorities, such as the Sheerwater Regeneration Project	WBC to invite paid staff and volunteers to any training sessions which will be of benefit and/or to arrange training where considered appropriate such training to be organised with CAW CEO	As and when deemed appropriate by WBC Members and Officers

CAW Business and Development Plan		
B. Research and Campaigns		
Influencing and Networking		
Objective	Activities	Achievement to Date
6. Complete Stakeholder Analysis	6.1 Use CitA stakeholder tool to produce analysis 6.2 Analyse the stakeholders to determine which relationships to pursue	Stakeholder Analysis carried out and WBC Members and Officers already identified as stakeholders.
Action Plan (the Plan)		
Proposed Activity	By Whom	Timescale
6.3 Identify key WBC Officers in each of CAW's main	CAW CEO	By the end of February 2019

advice areas to enable relationships to be built with CAW's relevant paid staff.	WBC Department Managers	
6.4 Arrange Quarterly catch up meetings between Officers and relevant paid staff to ensure more effective working	CAW CEO/Paid Staff WBC Department Manager	Dates for 2019 – 20 to be arranged by end of March 2019
6.5 CAW to arrange to undertake a structured approach to survey key WBC Officers and Members in respect of partnership and collaboration work to further develop the effective working between CAW and WBC	CAW CEO	September 2019

Appendix Two – Data collected over 17 working days (17th – 21st December and 2nd – 17th January 2019)

WBC Department			
Housing Options		New Vision Homes (Income Collection)	
Clients referred to CAW by WBC	7	Clients who had received letters from NVH advising them to contact CAW	2
Clients referred to WBC by CAW	2	New Vision Homes (Income Collection) Telephone calls/emails to and from NVH about clients	5
Telephone calls made by CAW to WBC to discuss clients' cases	2	New Vision Homes (Repairs)	3
Housing Benefit		Home visiting Caseworker	
Clients referred to CAW by WBC	1	Careline Referrals	20
Telephone calls made by CAW to WBC to discuss clients' cases	8	Home Independence Team	1
Telephone calls made by CAW to WBC to discuss	8		

clients' cases			
		Other	
Council Tax		Clients advised to contact CAW about variety of issues	6
Telephone calls made by CAW to WBC to discuss clients' cases	5		

Miscellaneous	
1 Housing Standards	Senior Housing Standards Officer contacted Housing Caseworker by email to say she had advised 6 individual tenants of a House in Multiple Occupation to contact her to help them apply for Rent Repayment Orders
2 Housing Options Officer	Officer contacted Housing Caseworker to advise that 2 new members of staff were joining the their team in January 2019 and would she be able to talk them through the eviction process
3 New Vision Homes	All letters sent to tenants who are in arrears say "you can obtain free impartial advice from local citizens advice on 01483 541646 (Court Help Desk telephone number)
4 Family Support Programme	Caseworker from FSP contacted Housing Caseworker about vulnerable family in rent arrears, with benefit problems and multiple debts, to ask if it would be possible to make an appointment for her to bring client to CAW as she needed help to support them
5 Homelink Manager	The newly appointed Homelink manager contacted Home visiting caseworker to ask if her and Julie Meme from WBC could meet with her to discuss joint working