

Report title: Extension of advice funding agreements

Wards affected: City-wide

Strategic Director: Alison Comley

Report Author: Hywel Caddy

RECOMMENDATION for the Mayor's approval:

That the Mayor approves the extension of ten funding agreements to seven VCS advice providers. The total funding commitment will be £586,957 (of which £57,089 comes from Public Health and the remainder from the Community Investment budget).

Key background / detail:

a. Purpose of report: To seek approval to extend existing advice grant agreements to the VCS advice agencies until 31st July 2017 to give the council the opportunity to consider holistically all council investment in advice services to find the optimum funding and delivery model for advice services for the future.

b. Key details:

1. Current calculations show that approximately £7-8m of council funding is invested in delivering advice or related services.
2. An opportunity has been identified to consider a 'whole system' approach to the provision of advice in the city, designing around the individual not the specialism so that the customer journeys are explicit and services aligned to them. This would be facilitated by a digital repository and self-assessment search tool that can reduce demand for advice and generate savings from advice investment and provision across the city.
3. Development of a potential new "whole system" approach has not yet commenced but will be completed by 1st August 2017. As such, this report asks to extend existing advice funding provision until 31st July 2017 to cover this period until any proposed new approach can be implemented. If necessary, the report asks to extend for a further 3 months to October 31st 2017 should there be any delays to this process.
4. It is proposed that savings will be identified when the whole system piece of work is implemented. If funding is reduced at this point without efficiencies being explored across the whole advice system, it is likely to result in a detrimental impact on the city's most disadvantaged and vulnerable citizens.
5. The funded advice network has delivered coordinated, responsive and well-targeted services to support some of the most disadvantaged citizens in the city. The services have demonstrated an ability to flex and adapt to demand, and have shown value for money for the council and the citizens of Bristol.