

Citizens Advice offices in Somerset County call for rethink on the cut to their core funding

Citizens Advice offices in Somerset County are calling on Somerset County Council not to go ahead with proposed funding cuts. These would completely remove vital core funding for each individual organisation.

Citizens Advice South Somerset is one of 5 Citizens Advice services in Somerset County, all are independent charities, based in Sedgemoor, Mendip, South Somerset, West Somerset and Taunton.

Funding from the county council is used to run the charities' day-to-day advice services.

The charities are warning that, should the cuts go ahead, they would need to look at options including reducing their opening hours and making other service changes. They estimate that almost 6,000 people facing evictions, bailiffs actions, unfair dismissals and benefit delays will no longer have access to their advice and support services as a result.

Last year Citizens Advice in Somerset collectively helped almost 23,000 people with a range of issues, including benefits, debt and housing. Using a Treasury Model the 5 charities calculate that the combined overall public value of their service is almost £30m.

The county council will make a final decision on funding for the local Citizens Advice offices in Somerset County on Wednesday 12 September.

You can support the charities by signing a petition by clicking this link:

<https://form.jotformeu.com/82483176924364> or take the link from our website www.citizensadvicesouthsomerset.org.uk

Rod McDonagh, Chair of Trustees at South Somerset Citizens Advice is making a joint statement with all 5 charities' trustees saying:

"We understand Somerset County Council are in a difficult position and they need to make some tough decisions. We appreciate the support they've shown us over the years, which has allowed us to help tens of thousands of people.

"However, we would urge them to rethink their proposal to cut funding. We offer a vital service that's also value for money as we stop people's problems from getting worse, which eases demand on other local providers.

"Our immediate priority is to work together to minimise disruption to the service should these proposed cuts take place, particularly for vulnerable clients. For now though, we remain open for the people of Somerset County."

Angela Kerr, CEO at South Somerset, would like to reassure everyone in community that "we will do our level best to continue the great work we do for Citizens of South Somerset". If you would like to show your support for us please use the link above.