



**Policy, Finance and  
Development  
Committee**

**28 October 2014**

**Decision**

**Title: Advice and Information Services by Leicestershire Citizens  
Advice Bureau**

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## **1 Introduction**

This report is to update members on the information services provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). The contract was first awarded in 2010 for a period of 3 years which was extended to a further 2 years in line with the contract extension rules within the agreement.

## **2 Recommendations**

Members are asked to:

1. Note the report and timetable for the review of the voluntary advice contract in readiness for the contract expiry in August 2015.
2. Approve the proposed timetable for the consideration and approval of a new advice and information service contract.

## **3 Information**

The CAB services in the initial three years of the contract had provided a three year performance report covering the progress and achievements of their services within this Borough.

The cost of provision for services as outlined in the Service Level Agreement is at a cost of £55,000 per year.

6 out of the 7 districts of Leicestershire and Leicester City had joined up to the services by 2013 and it was agreed that the CAB needed to provide a report to each district with a detailed reporting framework of performance.

Following the first three years an agreement by all Districts to extend the services led to the development of a performance reporting framework.

Attached at Appendix 1 is the first of the performance reports received for this Borough for the period April 2014 to June 2014

Some main headlines on how the residents access the service can be summarised as follows:-

- More people access the service face to face rather than by telephones

- A very small proportion of people access the services digitally
- A higher proportion of people are served at point of gateway/information in this Borough
- Nil pay loan debts issues in this Borough
- Nil referrals for vulnerable people referred for specialist housing casework/intervention

In addition to the attached performance information, all districts have been given access to information for each other's districts to enable analysis to comparator basis.

Drawing comparisons with a district similar in size to this Borough:-

- Greater number of one to one financial sessions per quarter delivered in this Borough compared to peer group
- Less number of people accessing telephone services compared to this Borough
- Less Council Tax debts and mortgage debts dealt with in this Borough
- Less personal debts, bankruptcy petitions and debt relief orders in this Borough
- 15 cases of vulnerable people referred for specialist debt work /intervention in this Borough compared to 30 for a similar size district
- 15 cases of personal debt in this Borough compared to 68 in a similar size district
- Compared to similar size district a lower number of older people are being advised, referred to specialist debt case worker and number of older people supported for debt issues in this Borough

As this is the first of the reports produced by the CAB under the agreed framework it is worth noting that in addition to the services procured there are a number of other voluntary and charitable organisations that many of our residents access services from and is likely to be the reason why there are lower numbers in this Borough

Officers regularly deal with referrals from services that our residents have accessed. Some of which are included below:-

- Age UK (Oadby and Wigston) small grant given by this Council under a Service level agreement
- Soldiers Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) –small grant given by this Council under a Service level agreement
- Age UK (Leicestershire) -no formal agreements
- Helping Hands- no formal agreements
- Christian in Poverty-no formal agreement
- Money Advice-part of the CAB Agreement
- Community Advice Legal Support-no formal agreements
- Shelter- no formal agreement
- Lawson and West- free legal advice surgery
- Help the Homeless (Local Charity)
- Acorn- European funded project through County Council to help people back in to employment

It is therefore proposed that the Council await third quarter performance information (due for end of December) and map out the voluntary advice services in the Borough.

The proposed timetable as follows:-

| What   | When                    | Who   |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Map of current voluntary advice services in the Borough focusing on financial services support | By end of December      | Lead-Community Engagement Officer supported by Community Safety and Tenancy Manager |
| Analyse and compare quarter 2 (July to September 2014) performance by CAB with quarter 1       | By end of November 2014 | Lead-Head of Community  |
| Provide detailed report and options to Policy Finance and Development committee.               | March 2014              | Lead Officer- Head of Community, Finance Manager                                    |

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| <b>Implications</b> |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Equalities (KG)     | Following the review and mapping services exercise an EIA is required to consider any impact that arises and identify ways to mitigate that.  |
| Financial (PL)      | Should the review consider that the services need to continue than budgetary considerations beyond 2015.16 will need to taken in to account in view CR1 as identified below. The review may lead to a potential ongoing revenue budget saving of £55,000. |
| Legal (KG)          | It is pertinent tht a continuous review is undertaken before the procurement of any future service provision  |
| Risk (APM)          | CR1 Decreasing financial resources<br>CR 4 Lack of credible governing body could lead to reputation risk<br>CR6 Regulatory Governance   |