



**CABINET**

**18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2016**

**AGENDA ITEM (7)**

**CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU - REVENUE GRANT FUNDING**

<b>Accountable Members</b>	Councillor Lynden Stowe Leader of the Council  Councillor Sue Coakley Cabinet Member for Health, Environment and Communities
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Diana Shelton Shared Head of Leisure and Communities 01285 623000 diana.shelton@cotswold.gov.uk
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To consider revenue grant funding for the Stroud and District Citizens' Advice Bureau (operating as Citizens Advice Cotswold District).
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>	<b>That a three-year funding agreement be entered into with Stroud and District Citizens' Advice Bureau, as set out in this report.</b>
<b>Reason(s) for Recommendation(s)</b>	The services provided by the Citizens' Advice Bureau (and indeed the various other voluntary and community sector organisations in receipt of District Council grant funding) help to deliver the Council's Corporate Strategy priorities/objectives/key tasks.  Agreement to a three-year funding arrangement would give greater security and stability to the organisation, across many aspects of its work and operations.
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All wards
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Recommendation to Council</b>	Yes, but only through the budget/Medium Term Financial Strategy approval process.
<b>Financial Implications</b>	Annual grant funding proposals are contained within the Council's budget proposals for 2016/17 and beyond.
<b>Legal and Human Rights Implications</b>	None
<b>Environmental and Sustainability Implications</b>	None

<b>Human Resource Implications</b>	None
<b>Key Risks</b>	<p>The Citizens' Advice Bureau relies heavily on the grant funding from this Council to operate a free advisory service to the people of the Cotswolds. With CDC assistance, the service has expanded since December 2013 and outreach facilities have re-opened in Moreton-in-Marsh and are planned to do so in Tetbury.</p> <p>Without CDC funding, it is likely that the service would either be reduced substantially or even close again.</p>
<b>Equalities Analysis</b>	<p>The Citizens' Advice Bureau provides services for all, but key work areas include assistance to a range of groups of people across the equalities strands, including: older people, low income families, people facing mental health problems, people living in isolation and/or rural areas, rural communities, people facing debt and related problems.</p>

<b>Related Decisions</b>	Cabinet - 8 <sup>th</sup> September 2011 - Review of the Council's Revenue Grant Funding for 2012/13 and Beyond (Minute CAB.35)
<b>Background Documents</b>	None
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>Appendix 'A'</b> - Request for Three-Year Investment Funding

<b>Performance Management Follow Up</b>	Performance management of approved grant funding is provided by regular monitoring of the outcomes specified in the relevant service level agreement.
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<b>Options for Joint Working</b>	The Stroud and District Citizens' Advice Bureau provide services for people across District boundaries.
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<p><b>Background Information</b></p> <p>1. The total budget proposed for the allocation of grant funding to voluntary sector organisations in 2016/17 is £92,895, which has not changed from 2014/15.</p> <p>2. A Cabinet decision on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2011 set out the allocation of the Council's revenue grant funding for 2012/13 and beyond, and these allocations have been rolled forward each year by the relevant Cabinet Member.</p> <p>3. By using the same principle, a grant allocation of £66,420 was to be proposed for 2016/17 in respect of the Stroud and District Citizens' Advice Bureau (SDCAB) operating as Citizens Advice Cotswold District (i.e. the same as 2015/16); and a similar sum has been provisionally included in the subsequent years of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy).</p> <p>4. The SDCAB employ staff, manages volunteers and pays rent for spaces to enable people to access advice locally to them. In light of this, SDCAB have requested that the Council considers a three-year in principle agreement so that SDCAB can enter into more attractive employment contracts and efficient lease agreements that last more than 12 months. This funding would, of course, be subject to the meeting of a range of agreed targets. In addition, it is suggested that the agreement be the subject of an annual review, to ensure that the service remains fit-for-purpose.</p>
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5. SDCAB have submitted a paper to support their request for a three-year funding arrangement, a copy of which is attached at **Appendix 'A'** to this report.
6. The document contains information about the aims and beliefs of the organisation; the links to the Council's own priorities/objectives/key tasks; the organisation's strategic aims and priorities over the next three years; workloads; draft budget for 2016/17; and some historical background.
7. With particular regard to the requested three-year funding arrangement moving forward, SDCAB state:

*In order to provide security for staff and increased ability to plan effectively and bring in external resources, a three year investment by Cotswold District Council would be beneficial. The need for advice services is not going to diminish in this time; in fact we are seeing a steady trend of people's queries becoming more complex and requiring longer to resolve, indicating the need for increased, rather than decreased resources over the coming years. A three year agreement would save time for both Council officers and CAB staff, giving more time to concentrate on providing these vital services for our clients.*
8. At its last Meeting, the Cabinet endorsed a similar three-year funding arrangement in respect of Visitor Information Centres.

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