

CABINET RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: 28TH OCTOBER 2004

EXTRACT FROM CABINET RECORD: 11TH OCTOBER 2004 – MINUTE CO60

CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU FUNDING 2005/06

[Decision taken by the Cabinet collectively]

DECISION: That the Cabinet recommends to Council the following:

- (1) The Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) be informed that the current year's Council grant is the final payment within the existing agreement;**
- (2) The CAB be informed that, given their failure to meet the criteria set in the previous three years, their funding request for £135,000 for 2005/06 is not accepted;**
- (3) That the Cabinet considers proposals for a housing quality marked debt advice service to become operative if the CAB can no longer provide a service in South Kesteven.**

Considerations/Reasons for Decision:

- (1) Report number FIN 209 jointly prepared by the Director of Finance & Strategic Resources and the Chief Executive which referred to the request of grant aid from the CAB for 2005/06 of £135,000 and continued rent free accommodation in Stamford;
- (2) From the information available, it appears that the CAB had not met all the criteria set by the Council in order for it to receive continued funding from the authority. In particular, the quality mark status had not been secured for the whole organisation by the requisite deadline of March 2004. The Quality Mark status obtained (as reported to the Capacity & Resources DSP on 30th September 2004) relates to general help advice. It was the intention of the Council that the Quality Mark status achieved should be at a level that would enable the CAB to bid for Community Legal Service funding
- (3) The bid for next year represents a considerable increase in expenditure. This has to be considered within the context of the completion of the Council's prioritisation process. The CAB's proposals do not offer any increase in the level of service provision previously set by the Council and there does not appear scope for reducing the level of grant aid requested unless the Council is minded to reduce the standard of service provision it has previously set;
- (4) The CAB was given an opportunity to make a presentation to members at the meeting of the Capacity & Resources Development & Scrutiny Panel on 30th September 2004. Following that presentation, the recommendation of the Panel was that the Cabinet does not support the bid for grant of £135,000;
- (5) There were two major non compliances and 29 other areas of non compliance by the CAB which despite assurances given on 30th September 2004, no evidence was submitted to demonstrate that it had addressed these significant and substantial areas of non compliance;

- (6) If, for any reason, the CAB is not able to provide a service after 1st April 2005, the Cabinet will need to consider whether the Council needs to provide any form of service to meet its obligations, particularly to persons at risk of becoming homeless. The estimated cost of either providing or procuring a debt advice service, potentially using volunteers where available, would be £50,000 per annum.