

REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT OF: Chief Executive

REPORT NO. CEX258

DATE: 9th November 2004

TITLE:	Provision of Advice Services in South Kesteven - 2005/6
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	N/A
COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Councillor Linda Neal, Leader
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	Vulnerable People
CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:	N/A
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:	N/A
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	N/A

Recommendation

That the Cabinet confirms that the contents of this report represent the outcomes for the communities of South Kesteven from the application of the fund determined by Council for the provision of advice services in 2005/6.

That the Chief Executive is given delegated authority to enter into negotiations on this basis and, in consultation with the Leader, to make minor changes to these criteria if necessary in order to reach agreement.

Budget for Advice Services in 2005/6

On Thursday the 28th October, Council approved the following resolution

“It is important that the Council recognises that the last payment has now been made to the Citizens Advice Bureau under the current funding agreement which ends on 31st March 2005. The Council’s existing budgeted commitment to funding has come to an end.

Because of the urgency of the situation from the Citizens Advice Bureau’s point of view and the importance of continuity of service to the community a budgetary decision needs to be made now rather than at the budget meeting in February 2005 – that could be too late for the Citizens Advice Bureau to maintain its service and related commitments.

I therefore move that the Council determines a budget of £50,000 for the financial year 2005/2006 for Advice Services in the South Kesteven area.

The determination of any applications within that budget will be a matter for the Cabinet who will need to ensure that outcomes from the Citizens Advice Bureau, or any other service provider are specified and monitored.”

Now that this budgetary provision has been made the Cabinet can consider the outcomes it would be seeking for the community from the application of this funding.

Outcomes in citizen advice can be assessed in a number of ways, including measures such as number of clients helped, amount of money received by clients as a result of assistance etc. Although such measures are useful indicators of the effectiveness of the CAB probably the key requirements relate to the quality advice and the accessibility of the service.

Quality of Advice

In view of the Quality Mark scheme operated by the Community Legal Services it is recommended that the Cabinet require that the service provider obtains and maintains accreditation of General Help level as a minimum.

Access

In the light of the needs of the District and patterns of settlement it is recommended that the Cabinet require that the service is open and available to the general public for:

9 hours per week in Stamford

6 hours per week in Grantham from the 1st April 2005 and 9 hours per week from the 1st October 2005.

3 hours per month in Bourne and the Deepings.

It is not proposed to specify actual times of opening since this will leave the service provider with the discretion to amend opening times to suit customer demands.

Monitoring

In view of the failure by the CAB to abide by the conditions set-down by the Council in 2002, it is proposed that the service provider submits a quarterly statement to the District Council confirming the following:

Opening hours and sites

Continued possession of the quality mark

Data on number of customers assisted and the nature of their enquiry.

Terms of Payment and length of the agreement

It is proposed that the payment be made in two half-yearly instalments, the second such payment being made on the conditions being met during the first quarter. Subject to this provision the agreement will be made for a one-year term

Delegation

In view of the time pressures I would propose that delegated authority is given to me as the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to make small changes to the terms set-out in this report in order to reach agreement with the CAB.

Duncan Kerr
Chief Executive