

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Report to the Executive for Decision 05 February 2018

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Leisure and Community
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Proposed Funding Arrangements for Citizen Advice Fareham 2018-2020</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Leisure and Corporate Services
<b>Strategy/Policy:</b>	Leisure & Community
<b>Corporate Objective:</b>	Strong, safe, inclusive and healthy communities

**Purpose:**

To review the existing Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Fareham Borough Council and Citizen's Advice Fareham and to propose a new two-year SLA commencing on 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2020.

**Executive summary:**

Fareham Borough Council provides funding to Citizen Advice Fareham who help to provide a free, impartial and independent service of generalist advice, information, support and representation in a confidential manner to vulnerable people in need of help and support who reside in the Borough of Fareham, including business concerns.

This report reviews the work done by Citizen Advice Fareham throughout the duration of their three-year Service Level Agreement (SLA) and proposes the Council enters into a new two-year funding agreement with Citizen Advice Fareham, with a review of the existing arrangements for providing the service from their main office above Fareham Library being undertaken by Citizen Advice Fareham and concluded by December 2019.

The purpose of that review will be to evaluate the current service delivery model and the outcome will help to inform the arrangements for a new SLA (Appendix A), which, subject to approval, would be scheduled to commence from 1 April 2020.

**Recommendation/Recommended Option:**

The Executive is recommended to approve a new two-year Service Level Agreement with Citizen Advice Fareham commencing on 1 April 2018, until 31 March 2020, as set out at Appendix A.

**Reason:**

To enable residents of the Borough to access free and impartial, independent advice, guidance and information on a range of issues.

**Cost of proposals:**

Continued financial support for Citizen Advice Fareham would result in a total payment of £240,000 for the period covered by the new SLA (2018-2020).

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A:** Citizen Advice Bureau Service Level Agreement - 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2020

**Reference papers:**

Executive Report – 20 April 2015 – Proposed Funding Arrangements for Citizen Advice Bureau SLA 2015-2018

**Background papers:**

File of Correspondence (Exempt by virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Executive Briefing Paper

<b>Date:</b>	05 February 2018
<b>Subject:</b>	Proposed Funding Arrangements for Citizen Advice Fareham 2018-2020
<b>Briefing by:</b>	Head of Leisure and Corporate Services
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Leisure and Community

#### INTRODUCTION

1. This report reviews the existing three-year Service Level Agreement (2015-2018) between Fareham Borough Council and Citizen Advice Fareham. The report proposes continued support from the Council for a further two years to enable Citizen Advice Fareham to continue to offer free and impartial, independent advice, information and guidance to Fareham residents.

#### BACKGROUND

2. Established in Fareham in 1942, Citizen Advice Fareham (CAF) is an independent charity which offers free, impartial and independent advice, information and guidance to Fareham residents. The service is provided from CAF offices on the first floor of the Fareham Library building, Osborn Road.
3. The organisation has a robust and pro-active Board of Trustees responsible for its own overall policy and decision making.
4. Citizen Advice Fareham operated in 2016/17 with a small number of paid staff (4.25 full time equivalents) and a volunteer team of 50 people who provided 12,300 hours of advice work. The voluntary workforce adds an estimated £197,742 of value to this local service.

#### CURRENT TRENDS AND ISSUES

5. The quarterly monitoring meetings between representatives from the Council and Citizen Advice Fareham enable a positive, productive on-going dialogue about the issues facing Fareham Borough residents.
6. Issues in the categories of benefits and tax credits, housing and debt remain the most frequency requested advice and assistance.
7. Whilst unemployment remains low in Fareham, in 2016/17 only 44% of clients seen were employed. From the remaining 56%: 14% were unemployed, 22% were retired, 10% were permanently sick or disabled and 6% were a home carer.

## **LOCAL DEMAND**

8. Citizen Advice Fareham has helped more than 3,600 residents with over 7,000 advice issues in 2016/17, including;
  - Money issues which were by far the highest demand with 29% advice given on benefits and tax credits and 15% of advice given on debt.
  - 1,199 residents were advised about benefits, or debts, or both. 35% of these had dependent children.
  - Recently establishing an outreach and home visiting service to those in communities who geographically or circumstantially (e.g. housebound due to illness/disability/caring responsibility) are unable to reach their main office venue. Outreach venues include, The Highlands Hub, Portchester Library and Locks Heath Community Centre.
  - 81 people with fuel and/or fuel debt problems were helped. With an ageing population, it is likely that this need will increase with time.

## **COUNCIL SUPPORT**

9. Citizen Advice Fareham has held a Service Level Agreement with the Council since 1987. The current agreement is regularly monitored on a quarterly basis by the Executive Member for Leisure and Community, supported by the Leisure and Community Manager and Citizen Advice Fareham present annually to the Leisure and Community Policy Development and Review Panel.
10. In addition to the financial contribution for their core work and the grant detailed above, the Council also enables the volunteers giving their time to Citizen Advice Fareham, to access free parking in the town centre on the days which they are volunteering at the Bureau. This is facilitated through the provision of six car parking passes which are provided to the bureau free of charge, for use in the Osborn Road Multi Storey Car Park. These have an approximate value of £4,000 per annum.
11. The current SLA is due to expire on 31 March 2018 and was a three-year period of which during this time the total grant awarded to Citizen Advice Fareham was £345,000.

## **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT GOING FORWARD 2018-2020**

12. It is proposed that within the new SLA, attached as Appendix A to this report, a review of the existing arrangements for providing the services by Citizen Advice Fareham from their main office above Fareham Library will be undertaken and concluded by December 2019.
13. The purpose of this review will be to evaluate the current service delivery model, with the aim of developing a business model which will allocate a significant amount of the grant funding provided by Fareham Borough Council to deliver an outreach service model. This will build on the successful trial outreach projects that are currently operating at:-
  - Portchester Library on a Thursday from 10.00am – 2.00pm
  - Lockswood Library on a Tuesday from 10.00- 2.00pm

- Highlands Hub on a Tuesday from 10.00-2.00pm

14. Providing an outreach based service delivery model is a priority. Therefore, a key aim for CAF is to utilise the grant funding provided by the Council to establish an outreach advice service at key strategic locations across the Borough, including Fareham South, Titchfield and Stubbington.
15. In addition to this, new performance monitoring measures will be set to help focus on what is happening within the Borough of Fareham. This will reflect the issues Fareham residents are seeking help and support for and any emerging trends based on local data.
16. The outcome of the review will inform the arrangements and measures for the new SLA which will be scheduled to commence from 1 April 2020.

### **PROPOSED FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

17. To enable Citizen Advice Fareham to respond to the demand for local help and manage the requests for support, the Executive is asked to consider the following funding;

2018/19 - £120,000

2019/20 - £120,000

### **CONCLUSION**

18. Citizen Advice Fareham have a three-year Service Level Agreement to provide free and impartial independent advice, guidance and information on a range of issues to residents residing in the Borough of Fareham.
19. Citizen Advice Fareham continues to offer a well-used, professional and independent service to Fareham residents. This report recommends that a new Service Level Agreement for their core services is approved for a further two-years. This will provide the organisation and service users with a guarantee minimum service and give them adequate time to evaluate their current service delivery model.
20. The outcome of the review will then help to inform the arrangements for a new SLA, which subject to approval would be scheduled to commence from 1 April 2020.

### **Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Emma Watts, Leisure and Community Manager. (Ext 4440)