

REPORT

To: ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE	Subject: REVIEW OF FUNDING FOR ADVICE SERVICES IN NORTH LANARKSHIRE	
From: HEAD OF PROTECTIVE SERVICES		
Date: 19 AUGUST 2009	Ref: CM/DR/TS/EC	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of a proposed review of the funding of advice services in North Lanarkshire which includes the Council's grant funding of the five Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx), the Cumbernauld & Kilsyth Unemployed Workers Centre, and the Council's debt advice services. It is intended that the results of this review will be reported to a future Environmental Services Committee meeting with a view to any recommendations and other agreed outcomes being implemented for the year 2010/11.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Information and advice services in North Lanarkshire are provided by a complex mixed model of statutory and voluntary agencies including the Council's own services, the CABx and the independent voluntary sector. Many of the voluntary sector providers receive funding from the Council in one form or another. The CABx and the Cumbernauld & Kilsyth Unemployed Workers Centre receive funding from Environmental Services through the Trading Standards service. A breakdown of this funding is shown in Appendix 1. The five CABx in North Lanarkshire are independent charities, each run by its own management board. Each CAB is autonomous but is a member of the umbrella body Citizens Advice Scotland. The Council's debt advice services include a number of posts that are funded through the Scottish Government Fairer Scotland fund and the Community Planning Partnership.

3. PROPOSALS / CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 It is proposed to carry out a review of the funding of the CABx with a view to developing proposals for the distribution of grant funding and seeking to achieve economies of scale where possible. Advice and information services available through the CABx in many cases supplement the Council's own provision, and additionally provide other services not available through the Council. In the current climate of financial restraint it is important that the resources provided to the CABx achieve best value and are used effectively and efficiently.
- 3.2 Funding has been provided to the CABx since the formation of the Council in 1996. Traditionally the grants have been used to supply core funding to the bureaux in order to pay managerial salaries, rents, rates, heating and lighting etc. As can be seen the amounts granted to individual bureaux are diverse, and in most cases are historically based on amounts provided by previous funding bodies. Service level agreements valid for 3 years are drawn up between the CABx and the Council, and these contain certain criteria relating to the quality and provision of services that the individual

bureaux should maintain. Administration of the grants and the monitoring of the service level agreements became the responsibility of the Trading Standards service in 2002.

- 3.3 The Council established a Review Group to look at the provision of information and advice services in North Lanarkshire which reported in 2005. Recommendations from the Review Group relating to the quality and distribution of advice services provided by both the statutory and voluntary sector have since been implemented. The basis for the level of funding did not form part of that review, and the amounts of core funding have remained largely unchanged except for inflationary increases awarded in most years.
- 3.4 The Trading Standards service receives funding through the Fairer Scotland Fund and the Community Planning Partnership which contributes to its own money advice services and those of the CABx and other outside bodies. This funding in its present format will cease at the end of March 2010, and in conjunction with the Chief Executive's service a sustainability review will be carried out to assess the effectiveness of these services and their future provision from next April.
- 3.5 It is proposed to establish a working group to take forward the review of advice services and funding, comprising representatives of the Trading Standards service, the Chief Executive's office and Environmental Services Business Intelligence unit. The scope of the project would include reviewing the funding arrangements, the sustainability of the services and generating economies of scale. The timing of the review is opportune given that the three year service level agreements with the citizens advice bureaux come to an end in March 2010, along with changes to Scottish Government funding. This will provide an opportunity to look at service quantity and quality, with an increased focus on outcome measures.
- 3.6 The review will include looking at models adopted by other Councils for funding CABx and will explore alternative methodologies for allocation of funding including for example to consider whether there is a justification for allocating some funds on the basis of deprivation indicators or other appropriate measures. In carrying out this work the group will consult with stakeholders, particularly the CABx Boards and Managers, and assistance in the review process has been offered by Citizens Advice Scotland.

4. CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 This report has implications for the amount of the Council's grant funding to the organisations concerned. Details of financial implications arising from the review will be included in the report on the outcomes of the review.

5. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no sustainability implications within this report.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 That the Committee agrees to the establishment of a review of the Council's funding of advice services, and agrees to receive a further report on the outcome of the review and resulting proposals.



Crawford Morgan
HEAD OF PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Local Government Access to Information Act: For further information on this report please contact David Roderick on 01236 616415.

Citizens Advice Bureaux Funding 2009/10

Core Funding	£
Airdrie CAB	98,904
Bellshill & District CAB	38,196
Coatbridge CAB	53,606
Cumbernauld & Kilsyth CAB	49,585
Motherwell & Wishaw CAB	92,424
Cumbernauld & Kilsyth Unemployed Workers Centre	42,191
Total	374,906

Money Advice	£
Airdrie CAB	53,400
Bellshill & District CAB	53,400
Coatbridge CAB	53,400
Cumbernauld & Kilsyth CAB	53,400
Motherwell & Wishaw CAB	86,400
Total	300,000

Other	£
Coatbridge CAB - outreach project	36,750
Airdrie CAB - business development officer	40,000
Total	76,750

Total	751,656
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