

## LOCAL CITIZENS' ADVICE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

Committee - Economic & Development Advisory Committee - 6 March 2018

Report of Chief Officer Communities & Business

Status For Information

Also considered by Cabinet - 8 March 2018

Key Decision Yes

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**Executive Summary:** This report sets out details of the proposed Service Level Agreement for Local Citizens' Advice in the District and seeks approval for funding to support their work over the next three years.

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**This report supports the Key Aim of Caring Communities - Providing the right support at the right time and reduce poverty and social exclusion.**

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Roddy Hogarth

**Contact Officer** Simon Davies, Ext. 7374

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**Recommendation to Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee:**

That Members note the report.

**Recommendation to Cabinet**

that the draft Service Level Agreement for 2018/21 is agreed.

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**Reason for recommendation:** The Service Level Agreement outlines funding for Local Citizens' Advice to provide a General Advice Service and a Housing Advice Service in the Sevenoaks District and sets out Service Standards for the delivery of these services.

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### Introduction and Background

- 1 The existing three-year Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Citizens' Advice North & West Kent and Citizens' Advice Edenbridge & Westerham was approved at the Cabinet meeting on 5 March 2015.
- 2 The SLA three-year agreement started on 1 April 2015 and will finish on 31 March 2018.

- 3 Quarterly monitoring meetings are held between officers and Local Citizens Advice Offices (LCAs) and an annual review meeting is held between the Portfolio Holder and Deputies, Chief Officer Communities & Business, LCA Chairs and Managers.
- 4 The information required from the LCAs for quarterly meetings is set out in Schedule B of the Service Level Agreement 2018/21 and that required for the Annual Review Meeting is set out in Schedule C. The annual review period is from October to September each year.

### **SLA 2018-21**

- 5 Discussions regarding the three year SLA to cover the period 2018/21 have taken place during 2017/18.
- 6 Suggested changes have been incorporated into the draft SLA set out at Appendix A. These relate to the monitoring information that LCAs are required to provide, taking into account changes to the way LCAs nationally record and report data and do not reduce the effectiveness of the information in any way.
- 7 The payment for the General Advice Service for 2018/19 and the two subsequent years is £ 98,540, unchanged from the previous SLA. Payment for the Housing Advice Service continues unchanged at £18,000 per annum.
- 8 The LCAs are required to agree between themselves how the funding is to be apportioned to each LCAs. They will then let the Council know so that payment can be made.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial

The level of grant for the SLA in 2018/21 in the Council's ten-year financial plan is £98,540 per year for the General Advice Service and £18,000 per year for the Housing Advice Service and these sums are included in the draft SLA.

#### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

This is a Service Level Agreement as opposed to a contract that has contractual liabilities. Accordingly, this is a statement of what is expected from LCAs and the Council with a requirement for the LCAs to provide performance data on the level and nature of advice given to clients.

The SLA covers statutory obligations, including Child Safety, Equalities and Safeguarding policies.

RISK	IMPACT	CONTROL
Failure of the LCAs to decide how to apportion the General Advice Service funding between the CABx	This could result in delayed payment to the LCAs and consequent threat to the service.	If agreement has not been reached between the two LCAs, the Council will apportion it.

### Equality Assessment

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below.

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	LCAs provide assistance to those most in need in the District. They assist residents on issues around benefits, debt, education, employment, financial services & capability, health & community care, housing, immigration & asylum, legal, relationships, tax and discrimination. The service is available to all residents in the Sevenoaks District.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	Yes	The Council makes referrals or signposts customers to LCAs relating to high hedges, debt and benefits, council tax, social housing, building control, land charges and nuisance.
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		There are no adverse impacts.

## **Conclusions**

The SLA outlines funding for the LCAs to provide a General Advice Service and a Housing Service in the Sevenoaks District and sets out Service Standards for the delivery of these services. It is recommended that the draft SLA for 2018/21 be agreed.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - Draft Service Level Agreement  
2018/21

## **Background Papers**

Draft Service Level Agreement 2018/21.

**Lesley Bowles**

**Chief Officer Communities & Business**