

Revenue Growth Bid – Fylde Citizens

Advice Bureau 2020/21

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Scheme Title: Fylde Citizens Advice Bureau

Description of Scheme:

1. Background

Fylde Council provides a grant to the Citizens Advice Fylde. This is done through a rolling three-yearly agreement on the basis that the CAB provides a range of free advice and support for Fylde residents for advice services including housing, benefits, health, education, consumer affairs, debt, employment, family and personal matters and taxation.

Each year the CAB provides a report to members on its activities through an annual report which is presented to the Environmental, Health and Housing Committee. The 2018/19 financial year will be made to the November committee meeting and this is attached for information. Representatives of the CAB would also like the opportunity to present their case to members of the committee at the same meeting for their revenue growth bid request.

Fylde Council provides a grant which covers the costs of employing core staff which comprises a Manager for the Service, who works three-days a week, together with two supervisors/trainers for the volunteers, one of whom works two-days per week and the other full-time and a part time finance and administration officer. The grant also covers travelling costs for the volunteers together with rent and utility costs for the building in which they are located in Kirkham.

The service operates Monday to Friday with facilities for appointments, drop-in visits and phone consultations. There is a strong volunteer base which has grown in recent years to accommodate an increase in service provision through a service being provided two-days per week from the Town Hall offices with one day allocated for appointments and the other for a drop-in service. The expanded use of the Moor Street offices has also allowed for a dedicated call centre to be introduced which has enhanced the service and also increased the requirement to grow the volunteer base.

The service from the Town Hall commenced in 2017, which enhanced the service offer in St Annes which was previously provided from the Age Concern offices for half a day per week. Councillor Aitken, Chairman of the Environment, Health and Housing Committee was keen to encourage the CAB to provide satellite service in St Annes on a more sustainable basis than the previous half a day per week basis.

During the last three years the caseload across the Fylde CAB has also risen significantly placing increased demands on the service.

The projected spend in 2020/21 for the bureau is £108,000 and the CAB is anticipating it will, in part, bridge the gap in its grant provision and current spend by drawing on some finance it has been able to release from reserves (a lesser amount of reserves is now required as set by its national body) and by improving processes to maximise effective use of available resources. For example, they have reallocated administration and finance duties from the Chief Officer to an Administration and Finance Officer. This reduces the Chief Officer role to three days and it will remain at this level for this financial year. However, in order to sustain the current service delivery across both Kirkham and St Annes, an increase in grant is being sought over the next three years which is outlined in Section 2.

2. Proposal

The grant provision built into in the base budget from 1 April 2020 is £91,846 per annum. This comprised a grant of £78,996 plus the rent which is met by the Council in the sum of £11,750 giving a total amount of £90,746 in 19/20. As the rent is set to increase to £12,250 in 20/21 the budget already incorporated within the base budget is £91,246 for the next financial year.

Fylde CAB are seeking an inflationary increase of 2 per cent on the grant amount together with an additional £6,000 in each year which results in a total increase in the amounts requested shown in the bracketed figures below) incorporating the rent.

A request for an increase in grant provision is being sought in the following sums:

2020/21 – £98,826 (£7,580 additional grant requested)

2021/22 - £100,438 (£9,192 additional grant requested)

2022/23 - £102,082 (£10,836 additional grant requested)

3. Outcomes (including details of the broader benefits achieved - for example community or environmental benefit, health and safety compliance, or statutory obligations)

The increase in grant would allow the Fylde CAB to sustain its current service delivery across both Kirkham and St Annes. It will provide for a range of free advice and support to be provided to the residents of Fylde for a range of services including housing, benefits, health, education, consumer affairs, debt advice, employment, family and personal matters and taxation.

4. Contribution to corporate objectives (how does the proposal achieve or help deliver priorities within the Corporate Plan?)

Value for Money – this maximises the council’s finances through an extensive advice service being provided predominantly through the use of volunteers and also champions the reputation of the Council by providing funding for this valuable service to the Fylde community

Summary of revenue costs

£000

Staff, salaries and volunteers	£77,230
Office and Premises *	£27,316
Governance	£ 3,373
Other	£ 650
Total cost per annum	£108,569

Any Other Information

CAB comments as follows. “The gap between the previous funds we received and our costs is approximately £14,000. Whilst we can manage some of this from reserves and our own resources, if we do not receive an increase we will not be able to expand our outreach service and will need to consider reducing the service we provide at the end of the next financial year”.

- Premises breakdown

Rent	£12,350
Water	£ 350
Heat & Light	£ 4,000
Insurance	£ 400
Cleaning, repairs and maintenance	£ 1,000
IT, equipment, support and depreciation	£ 2,180
Payroll, accting, consultancy	£ 2,236
Postage	£ 500
Printing and stationary	£ 1,000
Reference materials and subscriptions	£ 300
Telephone and comms	£ 2,500