



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR COMMUNITIES AND SAFETY

TOPIC – GRANT AWARD FOR DEBT ADVICE

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Corporate Director (Governance), the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee and all Members of the relevant Scrutiny Panel (individual Ward Members are consulted separately where appropriate). In addition, all Members are notified.

Five or more of these consulted Members can require that the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

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Committee Administrator:

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SUMMARY

At the Cabinet meeting held on 4th February, 2009, Councillor Cooper advised that £11,000 of the 2009/10 grants reserve had been ring-fenced to be awarded, if required, to Winchester and Bishops Waltham Citizens Advice Bureaux to offer debt counselling services.

Winchester Citizens Advice Bureau and Bishops Waltham Citizens Advice Bureau have indicated that there has been a significant increase in the numbers of people requesting support with debt advice in this financial year.

Due to the increased workload, both Winchester CAB and Bishops Waltham CAB have requested additional financial support from Winchester City Council. This additional funding will enable them to address the needs of people struggling with mortgage debt and also to provide advice on mortgage rescue schemes.

DECISION

It is proposed that the following grant awards be made in order to increase the capacity of debt advice work in Winchester and Bishops Waltham:

Winchester Citizens Advice Bureau	£7,500
Bishops Waltham Citizens Advice Bureau	£3,500

**REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS
CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Both Winchester Citizens Advice Bureau and Bishops Waltham Citizens Advice Bureau are in receipt of a revenue grant from Winchester City Council which supports the core activities of these organisations.

- Winchester Citizens Advice Bureau received £132,944 (including £9,980 from the Town Forum) of Revenue Grant for 2009-2010.
- Bishops Waltham CAB received £42,463 of Revenue Grant for 2009 – 2010.

Recently Winchester CAB and Bishops Waltham CAB have seen a significant increase in the amount of debt advice work that is currently being generated in comparison to the same period last year. The number of people struggling with mortgage payments in the current economic climate has risen and the increase in the CAB workload is due to supporting people with mortgage debt and providing advice on mortgage rescue schemes.

At the Cabinet meeting held on 4th February 2009, it was noted that the grant reserve stood at £41,917 and the minutes from that Cabinet meeting recorded that a sum of £11,000 would be ringfenced from this reserve for use by the CAB in response to the anticipated increase in debt advice work.

It is now proposed that this £11,000 be released for payment to the CAB as detailed above.

**FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION
OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE**

N/A

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR
OFFICER CONSULTED**

N/A

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

N/A

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision

Signed 03.09.09

Councillor John Cooper – Portfolio Holder for Communities and Safety