

COMMITTEE: SOUTH WEST REF NO: SWAC/18/10
DATE: 12 JULY 2018
SUBJECT: FUNDING REQUEST: CITIZENS ADVICE
DROP IN SERVICE AT HAWTHORN DRIVE
REPORT AUTHOR: SIMON LANNING
HEAD OF SERVICE: IAN BLOFIELD

Short description of report content and the decision requested:

This report requests that the Committee consider allocating £4,550 to Citizens Advice Ipswich for one year of costs for the Drop-in advice service offered at Hawthorn Drive General Practice surgery. The drop-in runs one day a week for 50 weeks of the year providing advice to residents on a range of issues including debt, tax, benefits, employment, housing and relationship change.

List of Appendices included in this report:

- a) Appendix 1 – Citizens Advice Hawthorn Drive Statistics

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This report was prepared after consultation with:

Internal consultees

External consultees

Nicky Willshere – Manager, Citizens Advice Ipswich

The following policies form a context to this report:

(all relevant policies must also be referred to in the body of the report)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(papers relied on to write the report but which are not published and do not contain exempt information)

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OTHER HELPFUL PAPERS

(papers which the report author considers might be helpful – this might include published material)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report requests that the Committee consider allocating £4,550 to Citizens Advice Ipswich for one year of costs for the drop-in advice service offered at Hawthorn Drive General Practice surgery. The drop-in runs one day a week for 50 weeks of the year providing advice to residents on a range of issues including debt, tax, benefits, employment, housing and relationship change.

2. Background

- 2.1 Citizens Advice Ipswich is a local charity and part of the Citizens Advice national network (Registered Company No: [34389567](#), Registered Charity No: [1064862](#)). It provides free independent, confidential and impartial advice and information to all members of the public.
- 2.2 Citizens Advice receives funding from Ipswich Borough Council for its core services run from Tower Street in the Town Centre. In recent years it has provided additional satellite drop-in services in areas of higher demand; North West Ipswich, Gainsborough and Chantry. These additional services have been funded from a combination of sources; core-funding subsidy, Suffolk County Council Locality funding and the North West Area Committee and the North West Ipswich Big Local Trust.
- 2.3 The drop-in service in Chantry has run regularly, once a week on Thursdays 9.30am-12noon, at the Hawthorn Drive General Practice since November 2015. In which time the service has tackled 853 issues for 173 clients (and 29 quick contacts) through 265 cases. The most common issues were respectively benefits & tax credits, debt, relationships & family, housing and employment. To date (report May 2018) the Chantry drop-in service had increased the income of clients by £61,023 overall and had clients debts of £36,883 written off.
- 2.4 Over 60% of the clients accessing the Chantry drop-in service, had not used Citizens Advice before. Many reported that they would not have travelled into the centre of Ipswich for time and money reasons.
- 2.5 The Chantry 'drop-in' was established and has been run, through subsidy from the organisation's other external projects (UK Power Networks). Citizens Advice Ipswich is working with the Suffolk Foundation and the Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group to develop a funding model to sustain and expand the delivery through GP surgeries.

Figure 1 – Citizens Advice worker speaking to a member of the public during Money Safety Week

- 2.6 The South West Area Committee is asked to pay for one-year of costs for the drop-in service so this transition can be achieved. The costs are

detailed in Section 9 and they include staff time (both face-to-face contact and follow up casework), management and some equipment.

2.7 **The amount requested of the South West Area Committee is £4,550.**

3. Relevant Policies and Area Action considerations

3.1 Building a Better Ipswich underlying principles:

- **Priority 1: A Strong Ipswich Economy**
 - Support from Citizens Advice enables residents to increase their income, manage their finances and to stay in employment
- **Priority 4: A Healthy Community**
 - 86 % of Citizens Advice clients report improved wellbeing following support, primarily through reduced stress and anxiety.

4. Options Considered / Under Consideration

4.1 **Option 1** – Approve allocation of funding of £4,550 to Citizens Advice Ipswich for one-year of costs for the drop-in service at Hawthorn Drive GP surgery.

4.2 **Option 2** – Approve allocation of funding to Citizens Advice Ipswich of an amount less than £4,550 toward the same costs.

4.3 **Option 3** - Do not fund

5. Consultations

- 5.1 No public consultation has been required for this application. The continued use of this drop-in service by local residents and their feedback are taken as evidence of demand. The Hawthorn Drive GP surgery has been consulted on the drop-in continuing to deliver from the same site for at least the period of the grant requested.

6. Risk Management

- 6.1 The Citizens Advice team and trustees are responsible for the proper running of the service. The risks outlined here relate to the Committee funding of the group.

Risk Description	Consequence of risk	Risk Controls	Probability of risk occurring taking account of controls (1: almost impossible - 6: very high)	Impact of risk, if it occurred taking account of actions (1: negligible - 4: catastrophic)
Poor fund management	Poor use of public funds	Citizens Advice record keeping Monitoring report	1	2
Actions to mitigate risk				
The Citizens Advice staff team is experienced in managing and monitoring grant funding. In addition, they undertake detailed monitoring of the clients served, issues addressed, impact achieved.				

7. Environmental Impact Assessment

- 7.1 Public transport can be used to access the drop-in service, and the location is within walking distance for many Gipping residents, however it is certain many people will choose to travel by car and those additional journeys will have a negative impact. The volume of additional journeys is expected to be low and so if minimal impact.

8. Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 8.1 The Citizens Advice drop-in sessions are open to residents of all backgrounds. The Hawthorn Drive GP surgery and meeting room are fully accessible. Citizens Advice operates an equality & diversity policy and monitors the engagement demographic for its services. The organisation provides advice to people of all backgrounds and specifically on issues of discrimination where required. It is expected that the project seeking funding will have a beneficial impact in respect of the protected characteristics.

9. Financial Considerations

Item	Cost
Trained adviser time for 1 day per week, for 50 weeks over one year 50 days x £70 per day	£3,500
Administration and coordination costs	£600
Laptop & printer	£450
Total	£4,550

9.1 Hawthorn Drive GP surgery provides the use of a meeting room for advice consultations free of charge.

9.2 **The amount requested of the South West Area Committee is £4,550.00**

10. Legal Considerations

10.1 The Council has the power to award grants to community projects through the Area Committees. The Area Committees have delegated Executive powers and devolved budgets.

10.2 Area Committees have the power to award grants in accordance with part 3, section 2 of the Council's Constitution i.e. the Area Committee terms of reference.

10.1 Citizens Advice Ipswich is a registered charity (No: [1064862](#)), and non-profit company registered with companies house (No: [34389567](#)) with named posts, named bank account, equality and safeguarding policies and year-end accounts. As such, the group meet the eligibility expectations set out in the Area Committee Funding Guide Lines.

11. Performance Monitoring

11.1 Citizens Advice Ipswich would be required to complete the Area Committee monitoring report as part of the standard funding agreement. This would include confirmation of the cases, clients and issues served in the period covered by the funding. The organisation may be invited to report to the South West Area Committee.

12. Conclusions

12.1 Citizens Advice are of great benefit to residents facing challenging circumstances, and often crisis. The support of the drop-in service, has proven to be valuable to residents of South West Ipswich, both in practical financial terms and in terms of well-being. The funding request before the committee is to secure this service for residents for a further year.

13. Recommendations

13.1 That the South West Area Committee considers the merit of the options for funding set out in section four and decides an option.

13.2 Reason:

- To support residents facing housing challenges
- To support residents facing financial challenges
- To support residents facing personal challenges
- To support residents facing employment challenges