



**REPORT of  
DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES**

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**to  
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
26 JANUARY 2023**

**MALDON CITIZENS ADVICE – FUNDING APPLICATION**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To receive a presentation from the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Maldon Citizens Advice.
- 1.2 To consider the request from the Maldon Citizens Advice for a review of its funding.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

To the Council:

- (i) That the request for additional funding of £14,000 for 2023 / 24 for Maldon Citizens Advice be considered for approval;
- (ii) That Members consider applying an inflationary increase of 6% to the Advice Services contract, totalling £4,500.

**3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 Maldon Citizens Advice (MCA) was awarded a fixed price three year contract in October 2021 to deliver an Advice Service to residents. This contract has provision to extend for a further three years, with the annual payment of £75,000. There is no inflation built into the contract.
- 3.2 The contract provides for accommodation at a peppercorn rent.
- 3.3 Through this contract the MCA delivers a vital service to some of our most vulnerable residents.
- 3.4 As the MCA operates under a volunteer model the cost of the service they are able to deliver is substantially less than the cost of the Council delivering the service itself.
- 3.5 The MCA has played a vital role in providing advice and support to residents during the Pandemic, and during the current cost of living crisis, where it is seeing a rising demand on its services.
- 3.6 The current contract enables MCA to approach the Council for further funding as part of an annual review and would be based on the performance of the previous year.
- 3.7 There have been no issues with MCA performance therefore the Council is able to review the funding provided to MCA.

- 3.8 MCA have made a request to increase funding for 2023 / 24 by £14,000 to recognise the additional demands on the service, and to help retain experienced debt advisors to support residents through the current financial difficulties.
- 3.9 In addition a 6% inflationary increase has been requested.
- 3.10 The Chairman of the Board of Trustees will present the funding request to Members.

#### **4. IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES**

- 4.1 The contracting of an Advice Service supports the Councils Goal of “Healthy, safe and vibrant communities” by ensuring that the service can be targeted to reduce inequalities. It also supports the goal of “excellent services and value for money” by being delivered through a volunteer model, making it a highly efficient and effective way of delivering the service.

#### **5. IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The effective delivery of an Advice Service reflects the corporate plan priorities of delivering excellent services and value for money, and supporting Healthy Safe and Vibrant communities, particularly through the use of a significant level of volunteering within the community. This service is increasingly vital to support customers who face the impact of the Pandemic, including Housing, financial and employment issues.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – A service which is easily accessible to residents, through website, telephone, and where required face to face appointments is essential to ensure equality of access.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – An effective advice service is essential to deliver a range of services which are not delivered by the Council. A lack of an effective advice service would impact adversely on the wellbeing of residents and would significantly increase the workload of the Council’s own staff. This advice service is increasingly vital as more residents are impacted by the cost of living crisis. Given the wide range of advice that the MCA offer it would not be possible to deliver this service in-house at the current cost.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Current contract and provides for funding of £75,000 per year.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – The absence of an advice service would have a significant impact upon our resources.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – None.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – The MCA actively supports volunteering in the District through its use of a high number of volunteers to deliver its services.

Background Papers: None.

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