

REQUEST FROM ROCHFORD & RAYLEIGH CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU FOR EX-GRATIA PAYMENT

- 1.1 The proper Officer reports that, Pursuant to Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15 (C) (2), the Chairman of the Review Committee has requested that the decisions made by the Portfolio Holder for Young Persons, Adult Services, Community Care & Well-Being, Health and Community Safety on the 9 June 2011 be called in for scrutiny:-
- ‘To approve an ex-gratia payment of £2150 in response to the request made by Rochford and Rayleigh Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) towards the costs incurred while waiting for receipt of their voluntary sector grant award.’
- 1.2 To assist Members, copies of the original report of the Chief Executive and the decision by the Portfolio Holder for Young Persons, Adult Services, Community Care & Well-being, Health and Community Safety are appended.

Albert Bugeja

Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services

Background Papers:-

None

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

REPORT TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR YOUNG PERSONS, ADULT SERVICES, COMMUNITY CARE & WELL-BEING, HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

REPORT FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUBJECT: REQUEST FROM ROCHFORD & RAYLEIGH CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU FOR EX-GRATIA PAYMENT

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 To approve an ex-gratia payment of £2150 in response to the request made by the Rochford and Rayleigh Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) towards the costs incurred while waiting for receipt of their voluntary sector grant award.

2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The CAB provides an essential service in offering advice to local residents on issues such as debt management and housing.
- 2.2 This payment is proposed in recognition that the CAB is the largest recipient of grant funding and has historically relied on the Council grant as its main source of income. Going forward the CAB will be encouraged to diversify.
- 2.3 It is acknowledged that the delay in allocating the grant has meant that the CAB was unable to restructure its service in time for the beginning of the financial year. Consequently there will be session closures, redundancies and reduced hours.

3 SALIENT INFORMATION

- 3.1 At a meeting on 12 May 2011, between the CAB and the Council, the CAB expressed concern about the level of funding awarded for 2011/12 and the lateness of the award. In response to the latter, the CAB has submitted a formal request for the ex-gratia payment.
- 3.2 The CAB was awarded a grant of £60,000 for 2011/12. This amounted to two-thirds of the overall amount allocated to the voluntary sector grants pot. Accommodation costs for the CAB which amount to approximately £35,500 are met by the Council. Previously the CAB received top slice funding administered through a 3 year SLA.
- 3.3 The CAB has reserves in line with Charity Commission guidelines to cover periods of financial interruption but this is considered to be the absolute minimum given their liabilities. This figure as at 31st May 2011 was approximately £20,000.
- 3.4 Further to the meeting on 12 May, the CAB has been encouraged to pursue other sources of funding and assistance which will help to develop a more

sustainable financial footing in future years. The Council will work closely with the CAB to assist in this process. For example, use of the GRANTnet service, opening up CAB opportunities to the staff volunteering scheme, assistance in pursuing additional funding from Parish Councils and Housing Associations will all been offered.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not to award the ex-gratia payment to the CAB.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A good relationship has been developed with the CAB over recent years. The CAB is considered to be a key partner in offering advice to residents on a variety of issues. This good relationship may be harmed if the payment is not awarded.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Funding this request would be sourced from underspends in the 2010/11 budgets.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was completed for the reduction in the overall amount allocated to the voluntary sector grants pot (£143,000 in 2010/11 reduced to £90,000 in 2011/12).

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

The decision

SMT Lead Officer Signature: Mr P Warren

Date: 8 June 2011

Background Papers:

None

EXECUTIVE DECISION BY PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR YOUNG PERSONS, ADULT SERVICES, COMMUNITY CARE & WELL-BEING, HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

SUBJECT: REQUEST FROM ROCHFORD & RAYLEIGH CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU FOR EX-GRATIA PAYMENT

1 DECISION MADE

- 1.1 To approve an ex-gratia payment of £2150 in response to the request made by the Rochford and Rayleigh Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) towards the costs incurred while waiting for receipt of their voluntary sector grant award.

2 REASON FOR DECISION

- 2.1 To provide additional financial support to the CAB at a time when funding is contracting.
- 2.2 The importance of the work undertaken by the CAB to the residents of the District is recognised as crucial in the current economic climate.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Not to award the ex-gratia payment to the CAB.

4 NAME OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER

- 4.1 Councillor Mrs Jo McPherson

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 5.1 No interests to declare

6 LEAD OFFICER

- 6.1 Paul Warren, Chief Executive

I confirm that the above decision does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

Portfolio Holder Signature: Cllr Mrs J E McPherson

Date of Decision: 9th June 2011