



Cabinet Agenda

Wyre Borough Council
Date of Publication: 9 April 2024
Please ask for: Marianne Unwin
Democratic Services Officer
Tel: 01253 887326

Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, 17 April 2024 at 6.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Poulton-Le-Fylde

1. Apologies for absence

2. Declarations of interest

Members will disclose any pecuniary and any other significant interests they may have in relation to the matters to be considered at this meeting.

3. Confirmation of minutes

(Pages 3 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday 14 February 2024.

4. Public questions

To receive and respond to any questions from members of the public.

Public questions for Cabinet may be submitted at any time by writing to Democratic Services or via email democratic.services@wyre.gov.uk.

Public questions for this meeting must be received by noon on the Thursday before the meeting is held and do not need to specifically relate to items on this agenda. Questioners should provide their name and address and indicate to which Cabinet member the question is to be directed.

The total period of time allocated for public questions will not normally exceed 30 minutes.

5. Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group final report

(Pages 9 - 32)

Report of Councillor Peter Cartridge, Chair of the Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group and Marianne Hesketh, the Director of Communities.

6. Grant Funding for Citizens Advice Lancashire West

(Pages 33 - 48)

Report of Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council and
Marianne Hesketh, Director of Communities.



Cabinet Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting of Wyre Borough Council held on Wednesday, 14 February 2024 at the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Poulton-Le-Fylde.

Cabinet members present:

Councillors Vincent, Berry, McKay, Bowen, Bridge and Le Marinel

Other councillors present:

Councillor Duffy

Officers present:

Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive

Mark Billington, Corporate Director Environment

Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities

Clare James, Corporate Director Resources and Section 151 Officer

Marianne Unwin, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager (Temporary)

Three members of the public attended the meeting.

CAB.33 Declarations of interest

None.

CAB.34 Confirmation of minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 10 January 2024 were **confirmed** as a correct record by those who were in attendance.

CAB.35 Public questions

None.

CAB.36 Proposal to develop a Wyre and Fylde Building Control Shared Service

The Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio Holder and the Corporate Director Communities submitted a report seeking the commencement of work on developing a shared building control service between Wyre Borough Council and Fylde Borough Council.

Councillor Le Marinel, Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio

Holder introduced his report.

Decision

Cabinet **agreed** to commence work on developing the shared service proposals as outlined in this report and delegate the Corporate Director Communities to undertake the work with Fylde Borough Council to achieve this.

CAB.37 Update on the future operation of the Council's theatres - Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre

The Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder, Resources Portfolio Holder and the Corporate Director Communities submitted a report to provide Cabinet with an update on the progress that has been made to secure a brighter, sustainable future for the council's theatres, namely Marine Hall and Thornton Little Theatre (TLT). The report also provided an update on the outcome of the Fleetwood seafront public consultation that was undertaken in late 2023.

The Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder introduced the report and discussed its key points. Councillor McKay expressed her support for the recommendations.

Councillor Vincent responded to questions from Councillor Duffy. These covered the following issues:

- The call-in process for future decisions following the formal tender process.
- The responsibility for the maintenance of the Marine Hall following a building survey report.
- The next steps if the council was unable to secure a suitable commercial operator for the Marine Hall.

In response to the last question, Councillor Vincent expressed that there were no plans for the council to close the facility if the tender process was unable to find a bidder.

Councillor Vincent welcomed the progress made towards ensuring a better service in the future. He supported the recommendations outlined in the report.

Decisions

The Cabinet **agreed**:

- To note the outcome of the public consultation.
- To appoint a theatres consultant to support the Corporate Director Communities to implement the short-term recommendations as set out at 5.5, at a cost of £30,000 to be funded from the Value for Money Reserve.

- To support the preferred option as set out at 5.8 and that approval is given to proceed with a tender process to secure a commercial operator for the management of the Marine Hall for a minimum of five years. The outcome of the tender process to be the subject of a further report.
- That, in consultation with the Leisure, Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder and the Resources Portfolio Holder, to authorise the Corporate Director Communities to enter into a lease for Thornton Little Theatre.

CAB.38 Treasury Management Policy Statement and Practices, Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Capital Strategy 2024/25

The Resources Portfolio Holder and the Corporate Director Resources submitted a report to set out the policies and objectives of the council in respect of Treasury Management activities, to explain how the council seeks to achieve the objectives and manage and control the activities for 2024/25 which includes the Capital Strategy.

Councillor McKay, the Resources Portfolio Holder, introduced her report.

Decisions

The Cabinet **agreed**:

- To recommend to Council that the Treasury Management Policy Statement 2024/25 be approved and formally adopted. (Appendix 1).
- To approve the revised Treasury Management Practices 2024/25 (Appendix 2).
- To recommend to Council that the Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategy 2024/25 (Appendix 3) be approved.
- To recommend to Council that the MRP Policy Statement 2024/25 (Appendix 4) be approved and formally adopted.
- To recommend to Council that the Capital Strategy 2024/25 (Appendix 5) be approved.

CAB.39 Revenue Budget, Council Tax and Capital Estimates

The Resources Portfolio Holder and the Corporate Director Resources submitted a report seeking confirmation of the Revenue Budget, Council Tax, Revised Capital Budget 2023/24 and Capital Programme 2024/25 onwards.

Councillor McKay, the Resources Portfolio Holder, introduced the report.

Decisions

Cabinet **agreed**:

1. That the following be approved and recommended to Council for their approval:
 - a) For the purpose of proposing an indicative Council Tax for 2025/26, 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 taking into account the Medium Term Financial Plan at Appendix 2 which reflects an increase of 2.99% for 2024/25 and ongoing.
 - b) The Revised Revenue Budget for the year 2023/24 resulting in a draw down from General Balances totalling £5,950 and the Revenue Budget for 2024/25 resulting in a draw down from General Balances totalling £695,000.
 - c) Members' continuing commitment to the approach being taken regarding the efficiency savings, detailed within the council's 'Annual Efficiency Statement' at Appendix 1.
 - d) The use of all other Reserves and Balances as indicated in Appendices 4 and 5.
 - e) In accordance with the requirements of the Prudential Code for Finance, those indicators included at Appendix 7.
 - f) The Revised Capital Budget for 2023/24 and the Capital Programme for 2024/25 onwards in Appendix 8.
2. That it be noted that, in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation agreed by Council at their meeting on 24 February 2005:
 - a) The amount of 39,138.48 has been calculated as the 2024/25 Council Tax Base for the whole area [(Item T in the formula in Section 3 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")]
 - b) A Council Tax Base, for dwellings in those parts of its area to which the Parish precept relates, has been calculated as indicated in Appendix 6.
3. That the following be approved and recommended to Council for their approval:

The Council Tax requirement for the council's own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish precepts) is £8,857,429.

4. That the following be approved and recommended to Council for their approval:

That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:-

a) £88,351,610	Being the aggregate of the amounts which the council
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	estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act, taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
b) £78,490,780	Being the aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
c) £9,863,830	Being the amount by which the aggregate at 3.4(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3.4(b) above, calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
d) £252.02	Being the amount at 3.4(c) above (Item R) all divided by Item T (3.2(a) above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
e) £1,003,401	Being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act and as detailed in Appendix 6.
f) £226.31	Being the amount at 3.4(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3.4(e) above by Item T (3.2(a) above), calculated by the council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

5. That it be noted that the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 considered excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 135 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and finished at 6.14 pm.

Date of Publication: 16 February 2024.

Options considered but rejected

Any alternative options that were considered but rejected, in addition to the reasons for the recommendations that were made, are included in the full reports.

When will these decisions be implemented?

All decisions will be put into effect five working days from the date of publication, unless a decision is "called-in" by any four members of the council within that period.

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Report of:	Meeting	Date
Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities and Councillor Peter Cartridge, Chair of the Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group	Cabinet	17 April 2024

Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group – Final Report

Key decision: No.

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To report the work of the Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group to the Cabinet.

2. Council priorities

2.1 To provide support to those who need it, including our most vulnerable and financially disadvantaged residents and our ageing population.

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet considers the report and recommendations (attached at Appendix 1) arising from the Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group which are as follows:

3.1 That Cabinet renew the agreement between the council and Citizens Advice Lancashire West for four years.

3.2 That Cabinet considers increasing the grant contribution payment to Citizens Advice Lancashire West from £30,000 as per previous service agreement renewals (with free use of a number of Fleetwood Market units worth £18,000).

3.3 That within an updated service level agreement, the use of the units at Fleetwood Market be added to formalise the arrangement.

3.4 That the council and Citizens Advice Lancashire West consider re-starting the trial of the digital kiosks, particularly over Wyre, and for the £8,000 set aside for this in 2021 be released.

4. Background

- 4.1** The council has had a historic working relationship with Citizens Advice Lancashire West to provide a free advice service to Wyre residents including debt advice.
- 4.2** On 2 June 2021, Cabinet agreed to enter into a three-year agreement with Citizens Advice which would cease on 31 May 2024.
- 4.3** The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a task group to consider options for extending the service level agreement beyond 31 May 2024.
- 4.4** The previous review of the Citizens Advice Lancashire West service was conducted in 2020/21.
- 4.5** The current review was carried out over four meetings held on 15 November 2023, 14 December 2023, 18 January 2024 and 2 February 2024. The group heard and received evidence from the following representatives:
- Diane Gradwell, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Lancashire West
 - Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities
 - Clare James, Corporate Director Resources
 - Peter Mason, Head of Contact Centre
 - Councillor Lesley McKay, Resources Portfolio Holder

5. Key issues and proposals

- 5.1** Following all the relevant information that was placed before the group, it was clear that the current arrangements between Wyre Council and Citizens Advice Lancashire West (CALW) are effective. The group acknowledged that the service was well used by residents and had been experiencing a rise in demand for the service, to the point that they had increased their outreach services.
- 5.2** The group found that the outsourced service has provided good value for money, enabling a higher number of residents to access services and a varied service provision for those who could not travel to the units in Fleetwood Market.
- 5.3** The group agrees with renewing the service level agreement with CALW, but acknowledged that the service level agreement had not been updated since 2017. The services they now provided were able to meet the rise in demand experienced since 2021, and the group felt it was important to

continue this increased level of service and formalise this in an updated service level agreement, along with the formalised free use of a number of Fleetwood Market units (worth a contribution of £18,000).

5.4 The group have recommended that the service agreement length be extended from previous renewals, to four years. This would then match with the Council Plan period and support the council in meeting its commitments over the four-year period.

5.5 The group also believe that the level of cash funding did not match what was currently being provided, and that the charity was matching the council's contribution in order to continue to provide more face-to-face outreach, telephone, video conferencing and web services. The group agreed that the funding level ought to be increased to reflect this.

5.6 The group acknowledge that the council has waived the rental and service charges for the use of the units at Fleetwood Market and would recommend this be continued. However, the group believes that additions to the service of three more days of face to face outreach, telephone, video conferencing and web services should be continued and therefore should have an impact on the level of funding, beyond the in-kind contribution of approximately £18,000 for the market units.

5.7 The council could elect to bring this service back in-house but owing to cost and other logistical factors this is not the preferred solution. If the services are not delivered by CALW, or by Wyre Council in the first instance, this could result in a greater financial impact on the borough longer term.

5.8 The group also considered the need to expand face-to-face outreach across the borough, in particular in the west of the borough. Many residents may experience difficulties in travelling to Fleetwood, and it was noted in evidence provided by Diane Gradwell that Wyre experienced the highest call for face-to-face outreach. The group asked both CALW and officers to consider re-starting the trial of the digital kiosks, which had been delayed owing to capacity at CALW. This could be used to help expand outreach into areas over Wyre.

5.9 The group is confident that the evidence presented shows the valuable service provided by CALW and that they will continue to provide an effective service throughout Wyre, in line with the recommendations made.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

6.1 It was considered by the group to not renew the agreement with CALW and look to providing the service in-house. However, this would have a significant impact on residents who would only be able to access the charity via its national call centres, as face-to-face outreach would cease.

- 6.2 It was considered by the group to renew the agreement with CALW but to not recommend an increase in funding. However, the group decided against this as they felt the evidence showed that the service provision needed to be increased following higher demands on the service and therefore the grant contributions paid by the council needed to be increased.

Financial, Legal and Climate Change implications	
Finance	<p>The current Medium Term Financial Plan includes a £30,000 contribution for the current financial year and nothing for any future years, pending the outcome of this review and a formal Cabinet decision. Any contribution agreed will be met from General Balances. The £8,000 referred to at 3.4 has been retained in the budget for kiosks.</p> <p>The budgeted income at Fleetwood Market reflects the assumption that the units currently occupied by CALW will remain so free of charge (at a cost of £18,000 to the council in loss of income) ongoing.</p>
Legal	If the service is to continue beyond 31 May 2024, and recommendation one approved, then a new service level agreement should be signed by both parties outlining the service to be delivered within the time period and other relevant terms and conditions.
Climate Change	There are no climate change implications directly arising from this report, however should the trial of the digital kiosks be approved and go ahead, then this could have a resulting impact by those residents who no longer have to travel across the borough to access face to face outreach.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	✓
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	✓
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
Daphne Courtenage	01253 887476	Daphne.courtenage@wyr.e.gov.uk	20/03/2024

List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None.		

List of appendices

Appendix 1 - Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group report - final

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**CITIZENS ADVICE
LANCASHIRE WEST
TASK GROUP
Final Report**

CHAIRMAN

Councillor Cartridge

TASK GROUP MEMBERS

Councillor Lady Dulcie

Atkins

Councillor Callum Baxter

Councillor Mary Belshaw

Councillor Maureen Blair

Councillor Paul Ellison

Councillor Henry Jackson

Councillor Adam Leigh

Councillor Ken Minto

Councillor Michelle Moliner

Councillor Jane Preston

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman: Councillor Peter Cartridge

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Introduction

Wyre Borough Council and the Citizens Advice Lancashire West (CALW) service have had a historic working agreement for over a decade. The service provides free, confidential, impartial and independent advice and information on a wide range of subjects.

Since 2011, task groups have been commissioned to review the service agreement between the council and CALW and to recommend to Cabinet whether to renew the agreement.

This was last agreed in 2021, where the council entered into a three year agreement with CALW, until May 2024. It was therefore recommended by officers that a task group be once again commissioned to review the service; particularly post-Covid, it was important to review any changes to the service.

The following report provides a summary of all the evidence that was presented to the task group alongside their conclusions and final recommendations.

Aim of review

The aims of the review, as specific within the scoping document (attached at Appendix A) were as follows:

- To assess and review the working partnership and Service Level Agreement between Wyre Council and the Citizens Advice Lancashire West service
- To make recommendations to Cabinet regarding the service level agreement and future service provision.

The review process

For its first meeting, the task group invited the Corporate Director Communities, Marianne Hesketh. The group then interviewed Diane Gradwell, Chief Executive of CALW, at its second meeting, and submitted written questions to the Corporate Director Resources, Clare James, the Resources Portfolio Holder, Councillor Lesley McKay and the Head of the Contact Centre, Peter Mason.

The group also received additional documentation provided by Citizens Advice Lancashire West on the following:

- Service overview for 2019-2023;
- Issues dealt with within Wyre;
- Costings for the service provided within Wyre;
- The advocacy service they provide;
- Information on where the most need/demand is in the borough.

The group also reviewed the service level agreement from 2017, previous task group and Cabinet reports from 2021 and 2017.

Summary of evidence provided by Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities

Marianne Hesketh, the Corporate Director Communities, attended the first meeting of the task group to provide context for the review. Documentation had been supplied by Citizens Advice in advance of the meeting.

Marianne informed members of the task group of the council's historic working arrangements with the CALW service, and gave members a brief overview of the last review in 2021. With the service agreement coming up for renewal in May 2024, the group was meeting to allow enough time to review the service level agreement and to consider any recommendations for a successful review prior to producing a report to Cabinet.

She explained to members that the council paid a grant payment of £30,000 a year; at the last review, £8,000 had also been set aside to participate in a trial of digital kiosks/self-help terminals at a number of locations across Wyre. However, this trial had never taken place and the money had been kept aside.

The members and the Director had a discussion about the use of two retail units at Fleetwood Market and offices at Poulton Road. It was highlighted that the service level agreement from 2017 had never been updated, and it would be necessary to clarify the use of these spaces and to potentially formalise their use following a review.

She said that overall, should the agreement be renewed, a new service level agreement would be needed to reflect the current service level.

Marianne Hesketh was asked a number of questions in relation to the quality of the service and the working relationship between the council and CALW. The following are relevant to the group's aims:

- What consequences would there be if the group recommended not to renew the agreement?

Answer: Residents would still be able to access the national service, however this would be limited to telephone support.

- Did the council have the ability to bring calls in-house?

Answer: Historically, the council had two in-house debt advisors. However, at this moment in time they did not have the capacity to bring this service back and would also need well-trained and knowledgeable staff.

- What were the reasons provided in regards to the delay of the trial for the digital kiosks/self-help terminals?

Answer: This was due to staffing and personnel issues and the impact of Covid-19.

Summary of evidence provided by Diane Gradwell, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Lancashire West

Diane Gradwell, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Lancashire West, attended the second meeting of the task group to answer questions from the task group.

Questions had been agreed and circulated in advance of the meeting; Diane submitted written responses to the questions below:

- 1. Can you give a cost breakdown of the grant payment from Wyre Council, and what this is used for? With this, can you provide the group with the latest accounts with the Charity Commission, management accounts and internal audit documents for review?**

Please see attached. Also attached is a full service overview document for the years 2019 – 2023.

- 2. What current outreach do you provide, including both face to face and alternatives? How has the use of the units at Fleetwood Market and the offices at Poulton Road impacted on this?**

There is no provision within this current contact for outreach. We employ an Advice Session Supervisor (ASS) on site at Fleetwood Market, which is our main face to face location. It is a quality/support requirement that all volunteers have qualified on- site support. The ASS is also required to provide advice services directly to clients. Currently we are experiencing high volumes of clients wishing to access this location.

In addition to the face to face service we also provide 5-day per week generalist advice telephone, email, webchat and video call services, which again employs an ASS qualified to oversee and deliver this multi-channel service.

Other services we deliver for Wyre residents:

- Specialist debt and welfare benefits services funded through MaPS national contracts. It is a requirement of this contract that face to face services are restricted to vulnerable clients.
- Pension Wise is a MaPS funded programme providing guidance around people's pension options. Available to anyone aged 50+ and delivered with funder restricted face to face provision.
- Macmillan funded welfare benefits project for people with cancer.
- Energy Advice

- 3. How many of the 2017 and 2021 recommendations from previous task group reviews have been actioned? Specifically, can you please explain the current situation with the trial of the digital kiosks as agreed at Cabinet in June 2021?**

The digital kiosks are still in the development stage as unfortunately, following the untimely death of Guy Simpson, work was postponed. However, no contract or funding was ever received from yourselves for this work.

4. Given the current demand on services, can you provide any forecasts of demand, particularly focussing on Over Wyre? Are there any steps currently being discussed to improve services in the rural areas?

Initially this funding we designed to provide 2 days per week of outreach only. However, due to demand for increased services and the need to recruit and support volunteers, it was agreed with the Council to have a dedicated location. Your representative on our Trustee Board at that time arranged for accommodation within the offices at Poulton Road. This development obviously increased costs, which have been borne by the Charity since that time. The move to Fleetwood Market was again agreed with yourselves to help increase the footfall within the market. Due to the ongoing costs of servicing two locations the Charity moved to the market entirely.

However, what we are experiencing is lack of private interview space. It is a requirement of our service that all client interview must be held in a private space. We would be happy to discuss alternative locations.

5. In the event the support through the Council was not renewed, how would this impact residents? Has the service considered additional or alternative funding through other means, such as the national charity or through government?

Funding for generalist services does not attract project funding. As with our other local authority partners we rely on funding for generalist services. However, as mentioned above LA funding does not cover the true cost of this service delivery and has been/is currently being subsidised by the Charity.

6. In the event support was renewed, and the use of spaces in Fleetwood formalised, would there be a potential for support to Fleetwood Market for the use of the units?

As previously mentioned the service is already being subsidised by the Charity. However, given the issue with private interview space within the market additional/alternative accommodation may have to be sought. Again we are happy to work with the Council to look at alternative venues and/or methods of service delivery.

In addition to the written responses, Diane answered questions from members.

Diane explained to members that with the trial of the digital kiosks, at the time they had not received the £8,000 set aside for this. Currently, their ICT department had the capacity and knowledge to move this forward, but at the time it was delayed due to personnel issues.

However, she highlighted to members that the service saw the biggest call for face to face outreach in Wyre. Within the current space at Fleetwood Market, they often saw queues of clients going out of the doors; this was not just due to the high demand, but due to the lack of private interview spaces they needed. She felt that the service was under pressure to provide face to face outreach; this was impacted by the loss in volunteers by almost 50%, and the lack of physical space to place their volunteers.

In response to a question, Diane explained to the group that the demand for face to face outreach in Wyre but specifically Fleetwood was due to several factors, including the ability of residents to travel to get the service. Many clients felt more comfortable speaking to someone privately, face to face. She informed members that this was across the spectrum, and not down to age.

Members asked what the additional value was to the council, above and beyond the provisions set out in the service level agreement. Diane explained that they provided the general service, but with the rising figures of client numbers and issues they supported residents with, they increased the level of service they provided to the community. The charity itself matched the contribution given by the council and brought in other specialist services. Without the contribution from the council, they would not be able to provide the service at all; however, the agreed upon amount had initially been for one person, two days a week. Due to the rise in demand, and the agreement on the venue space in 2021, the service now provided two paid members of staff to supervise volunteers, five days a week, alongside telephone and web services.

They were not able to provide the service with just volunteers; they required a trained supervisor, which was what the grant contribution paid towards. The telephone services were accommodated by volunteers in the call centre in South Ribble, or picked up nationally.

Diane gave verbal information on the contribution levels of other councils in the North West; with Chorley contributing £56,000, South Ribble £50,000 and West Lancashire £50,000. She also informed members that Blackburn with Darwen had entered into a contract with Citizens Advice to take over their service, and so they now worked as part of the council.

She concluded to the group that the service could not ignore the need, despite that the contributions did not satisfy the amount required to increase the service. The service level agreement, unchanged since 2017, did not reflect the current service provision. She highlighted that accommodation was an issue, and the service could not provide a contribution towards Fleetwood Market. However, she agreed that they needed to diversify their location of face to face sites and wanted to expand their outreach, but the space needed to be suitable for their needs.

Summary of evidence provided by Clare James, Corporate Director Resources, and Councillor Lesley McKay, Resources Portfolio Holder

For the third meeting of the task group, it had been agreed to put together questions and circulate these to the Corporate Director Resources and Portfolio Holder Resources. Questions revolved around the financial impact of outsourcing the service versus providing this in-house, and the trial of the digital kiosks.

Responses were received from the Portfolio Holder, Councillor McKay, Corporate Director Resources, Clare James, Corporate Director Communities, Marianne Hesketh, and Head of the Contact Centre, Peter Mason. A briefing note had been presented to the group, and is included below:

The council understands the need demonstrated for the services provided by Citizens Advice and values the work the service and its volunteers provide for the people of Wyre.

A number of years ago, the council employed two in-house debt advisors, which reduced to one and then none as the work eventually dried up as residents preferred to use a service independent of the council e.g. Money Advice Service and National Debtline (Debt advice – Wyre Council). In order to ensure that some provision of free debt advice was available locally to residents, the council agreed to continue to support the service provided by CALW where we had existing relationships and value for money could be achieved.

The provision of an in-house service providing debt advice would cost significantly more than current grant contributions to CALW.

It has been suggested by the task group that the grant contribution payments to CALW be increased over and above the current £30,000 level. The task group have also suggested releasing the contribution towards the digital kiosks trial, which was previously agreed in 2021.

Rather than consider the £30,000 current cash contribution as Wyre's subsidy, the in-kind amount for the use of Fleetwood Market units, should the service remain there, should also be factored in. This roughly equates to £18,000 per annum, thereby bringing Wyre's contribution more in line with other local authorities at £48,000. Any decision to renew and/or increase the service agreement and its contributions to CALW will have a negative impact on the gap in the medium term financial plan (MTFP) as this provision runs out in 2023/24 pending further approval from Cabinet.

In terms of the digital kiosks trial, it may be possible to re-start the project and to release the funds. However, this project was a response to Covid-19 and it may be felt that other solutions have rendered this one no longer required.

Supporting documents

Elected members were presented with a number of additional documents that supported them in their work.

The documents are hyperlinked below. If you require any assistance with accessing these, please email democratic.services@wyre.gov.uk

[Citizens Advice Lancashire West service overview 2019-2023](#)

[Service level agreement between CALW and Wyre Council, 2017](#)

[Wyre issues 2021-2023](#)

[Cost of living data](#)

[Additional data](#)

[Costings for Wyre](#)

[Cabinet report, 5 June 2021](#)

[Full minutes pack of the Citizens Advice Lancashire West task group](#)

Conclusions and recommendations

After reviewing the evidence presented, the task group concluded that the service ought to be renewed and that they provided a valuable resource for residents. It was vital that this service was provided for residents and the council at this moment was not in a position to do so in-house.

The task group concluded that the face to face outreach provision needed to continue in Fleetwood, but that more work needed to be done to increase this for residents, particularly in the west of the borough. This could potentially be done by starting the trial of the digital kiosks.

Finally, the task group agreed that the service level agreement needed updating, but equally that the financial contribution from the council needed to be reviewed. The service had taken the decision to increase its provision to meet the demands experienced, and it was important this be reflected in an updated service level agreement and the contributions reviewed.

Following from their conclusions, the task group propose the following recommendations be made to Cabinet:

Recommendation One: That Cabinet renew the agreement between the Council and Citizens Advice Lancashire West for four years.

The group acknowledges the need and demand for the service by the residents of Wyre and praises CALW for their work during the pandemic and beyond. The group understands that the council is no longer in a position to address this need themselves, and the desire from residents for a more independent body.

The service has provided good value for money, enabling a much higher number of residents to access advice services than would be possible for the council to deliver itself.

By recommending that the agreement be renewed for four years, this matches the new Council Plan period.

Recommendation Two: That Cabinet considers increasing the grant contribution payment to Citizens Advice Lancashire West from £30,000 as per previous service agreement renewals.

Following the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, CALW has demonstrated an increase in demand for their service (according to their 2019-2023 Service Overview) and increased the provision for Wyre from two days a week of outreach to five, including telephone, video call services and web services.

The service has informed the group that in order to meet the demand of residents, they have matched the council's contribution in order to meet these growing levels of demand.

The group acknowledge that the council has waived the rental and service charges for the use of the units at Fleetwood Market and would recommend this be continued. However, the group believes that additions to the service of three more days of face to face outreach, telephone, video conferencing and web services should be continued and therefore should have an impact on the level of funding, beyond the in-kind contribution of approximately £18,000 for the market units. Equally, the level of funding has remained the same for over a decade, not taking into account the changing financial environment.

If the required services are not delivered by CALW, or by the Council, in the first instance, this could result in greater financial impact on the borough longer term.

If Cabinet are minded to approve, then the service level agreement ought to be updated as this has not happened since 2017. If this is agreed, it is important that this be formalised and agreed by both parties.

Recommendation Three: That within an updated service level agreement, the use of the units at Fleetwood Market and the in-kind contribution be added to formalise their use.

The use of the two units in Fleetwood Market was discussed and agreed during the 2021 review and subsequent Cabinet report waiving the cost per annum rent plus service charge, however this has not been formalised within the service level agreement.

During discussions with representatives from CALW, members noted the importance of having a premises designated for face to face outreach and noted the high demand from residents for this.

The service has also experienced the biggest calls for face to face outreach in Fleetwood, with the majority of clients being in Fleetwood.

The group also acknowledge that for many residents, travel to Fleetwood may not be feasible. The group would also ask Cabinet to consider opening discussions in the future for a potential move or additional premises for the service, who require private interview space for their clients.

Recommendation Four: That the Council and Citizens Advice Lancashire West consider re-starting the trial of the digital kiosks, particularly over Wyre, and for the £8,000 set aside for this in 2021 be released.

It was agreed as a recommendation of the 2021 review to trial the digital kiosks/self-help terminals, particularly Over Wyre to improve outreach in the more rural areas.

Due to staffing capacity issues, the trial was put on hold and the moneys set aside for a future project.

The task group acknowledge the need to provide a version of face to face outreach in the more rural areas to ensure that all residents are catered for.

It has been confirmed that this amount has been set aside and that CALW would be willing to re-start the trial.

Whilst discussions around the location of any face to face outreach may be ongoing, it is important that all residents have the ability to access the service, especially those who cannot access it via telephone, video conferencing and the website.

In order to review the trial, the task group recommend that representatives from CALW and the Council's representative on their Board of Trustees update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on biannual basis.

Councillors' attendances

There were four meetings of the task group.

NAME	MEETINGS ATTENDED (maximum 4)
Councillor Lady Dulcie Atkins	4
Councillor Callum Baxter	1
Councillor Mary Belshaw	2
Councillor Maureen Blair	2
Councillor Peter Cartridge	4
Councillor Paul Ellison	4
Councillor Henry Jackson	3
Councillor Adam Leigh	2
Councillor Kenneth Minto	1
Councillor Michelle Moliner	1
Councillor Jane Preston	2

List of appendices

Appendix A – Citizens Advice Lancashire West task group – final scoping document

APPENDIX A

Citizens Advice Lancashire West Task Group - Scoping Document

Review Topic	Citizens Advice Lancashire West (formerly Citizens Advice Bureau)
Chair	Councillor Cartridge
Group Membership	Cllrs D Atkins, Baxter, Belshaw, Blair, Cartridge, Ellison, Jackson, Leigh, Minto, Moliner, Preston
Officer Support	Daphne Courtenage, Democratic Services Officer
Purpose of the Review	To assess and review the working partnership and Service Level Agreement between Wyre Council and the Citizens Advice Lancashire West service and make recommendations to Cabinet regarding the service level agreement and future service provision.
Essential Criteria (at least one must be marked)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A council priority (as set out in the Business Plan) <input type="checkbox"/> A matter of significant, demonstrable public concern, as raised through ward councillors, local media etc.
Role of Overview and Scrutiny in this Review (mark all that apply)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Holding Executive to account – Key Decision <input type="checkbox"/> Holding Executive to account – performance based <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community champion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> External partnership

	<input type="checkbox"/> Contribution to policy development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy review <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory duties / compliance with codes of practice
Aims of Review / Terms of Reference	In reviewing the current arrangements of the working partnership between Wyre Council and the Citizens Advice Lancashire West service, to assess the effectiveness of the current arrangements, value for money of the service and make recommendations to Cabinet in regards to the service level agreement.
What specific value can Scrutiny add to this work area?	Ensure value for money for residents and influence executive decisions.
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review previous Cabinet decisions and task groups reports • Review performance and usage data • Compare arrangements with other Local Authorities in the area • Interview key witnesses
Limits of Review	The review will focus on the details of the service level agreement and not on wider issues surrounding debt, cost of living etc.
Potential Expert Witnesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diane Gradwell, Citizens Advice Lancashire West Chief Executive - Marianne Hesketh, Corporate Director Communities - Mark Broadhurst, Head of Housing and Community Services - Service users
Documents to be considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Service Level Agreement - Scrutiny review report to Cabinet on 18 January 2017 and 2 June 2021 - Citizens Advice performance reports

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comparison between the arrangements with different local councils - Internal reports
Risks	The review is intended to be a very short assessment of the working relationship and also could start to focus on questions outside of the review topic.
Level of Publicity	Private.
Indicators of a Successful Review	Clear recommendations to Cabinet on whether or not to support the agreement and future service provision beyond May 2024.
Approximate Timeframe	2-3 months
Projected Start Date	November 2023



Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council and Marianne Hesketh, Director of Communities	Cabinet	17 April 2024

Grant Funding for Citizens Advice Lancashire West
--

Key decision: No

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To recommend that the council enters into a four-year grant and service level agreement with Citizens Advice Lancashire West (CALW) for the provision of welfare advice services in the Borough until 31 May 2028.

2. Council priorities

2.1 This relates to the people and communities priority and the commitment to ‘provide support to those who need it, including our most vulnerable and financially disadvantaged residents and our ageing population’.

3. Recommendations

3.1 To agree that the council enter into a four-year grant and service level agreement with Citizens Advice Lancashire West (CALW) until 31 May 2028 at a cost of £35,000 per annum.

3.2 To agree an in-kind contribution (worth an estimated £18,000 per annum) to allow the use of up to two units at Fleetwood Market to facilitate a face-to-face outreach service.

3.3 The previously allocated £8,000 for the digital kiosk trial is no-longer being progressed by the CALW and will instead be returned to general balances to support the increased annual grant at 3.1.

4. Background

4.1 The council and CALW service have had a historic working arrangement since 2011. The service provides free, confidential, impartial and independent advice and information to Wyre residents. Since 2011,

Overview and Scrutiny task groups have been commissioned to review the service level agreement and to recommend to Cabinet whether to continue to award the grant. The last agreement commenced in June 2021, where the council entered into a three-year agreement with CALW until 2024.

4.2 The latest evaluation of performance has been carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and their draft report was agreed at their meeting on 26 February 2024 and is presented to Cabinet on this same agenda as a separate earlier item. There are four recommendations:-

- That Cabinet renew the agreement between the council and Citizens Advice Lancashire West for four years.
- That Cabinet considers increasing the grant contribution payment to Citizens Advice Lancashire West from £30,000 as per previous service agreement renewals.
- That within an updated service level agreement, the use of the units at Fleetwood Market and the in-kind contribution be added to formalise their use.
- That the Council and Citizens Advice Lancashire West consider re-starting the trial of the digital kiosks, particularly for Over Wyre and for the £8,000 set aside for this in 2021 be released.

4.3 Performance information provided by the CALW shows that between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2023, they have assessed and assisted 16,883 Wyre clients with 39,244 issues across all enquiry areas. The largest enquiry areas are benefits and tax credits, debt advice and universal credit. They have assisted Wyre clients to address £11,919,034 worth of debt and access £5,980,289 worth of disability benefits.

5. Key issues and proposals

5.1 The grant funding will contribute towards the CALW core service which includes a five days per week call centre which operates from 9am-5pm. This provides access to advice by telephone, webchat and email. The funding also supports a general advice service delivered by the digital health centre based at Fleetwood Market, three days a week (Tuesday, Thursday and Friday). Outreach for general advice and debt is also provided by way of pre-booked appointments. All advisers are AskRe trained, which allows them to identify clients with domestic abuse issues and refer them to the appropriate support agencies.

5.2 The service level agreement has been updated and is attached at Appendix 1.

5.3 The previously allocated £8,000 for a digital kiosk trial is no-longer being progressed by the CALW, so it is proposed that this funding will instead be returned to general balances to support the increased annual grant at 3.1.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

- 6.1** Provide no grant to CALW – this was considered and rejected. Without the grant contribution from the council the CALW would not be able to provide any service in Wyre. The key statistics above clearly show there is demand for the service.
- 6.2** Retain the level of grant to CALW at £30,000 – this was considered and rejected. The level of outreach support would reduce to two days a week and it was felt that this would not provide a sufficient level of service for our residents.
- 6.3** Increase the level of grant to £40,000 – this was considered and rejected. When factoring in the in-kind contribution from the use of the Fleetwood market units and the proposed increase to £35,000 per annum, then the level of grant to CALW is comparable with other Lancashire districts.

Financial, Legal and Climate Change implications	
Finance	<p>The grant of £35,000 per annum will be paid in four instalments and over the four-year period represents a commitment of £140,000. It is proposed that the cost be met from general balances.</p> <p>The previously allocated £8,000 for digital kiosks will be returned to general balances to offset the increased annual grant. The Medium Term financial Plan will be updated to reflect the increased commitment.</p>
Legal	The grant and service level agreement with the CALW has been amended accordingly and the draft is attached at Appendix 1.
Climate Change	There are no climate change implications.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

report author	telephone no.	email	date
Marianne Hesketh	01253 887350	marianne.hesketh@wyre.gov.uk	08/04/2024

List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

List of appendices

Appendix 1 – draft grant and service level agreement

SERVICE LEVEL AND GRANT AGREEMENT

Appendix 1

This Service Level Agreement is made the ***** day of ***** 2024

PARTIES

The Service Level Agreement (Agreement) is made between:

Wyre Borough Council of the Civic Centre, Breck Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, FY6 7PU
(Council) and
Citizens Advice Lancashire West of 35-39 Market Street, Chorley PR7 2SW (CALW)

Introduction

The Council agrees to provide grant funding of £35,000 per annum for the provision of core advice and information services by Citizens Advice Lancashire West (CALW) as set out in this Agreement.

The objective of CALW is to provide free confidential, impartial and independent advice to enable local residents to deal with a wide range of issues, including benefits, housing, money advice, employment, consumer, relationships, taxation and many more. The nature of the assistance provided will depend on a client's needs.

The standards of service are set out in the National Citizens Advice Quality Assurance Standards Membership Agreement and the Advice Quality Standard.

CONTENTS:

Part 1 - General conditions

Part 2 - Service objectives and specification

Part 3 - Financial and resourcing arrangements

Part 4 - Monitoring arrangements

Part 5 - Declaration

PART 1 – GENERAL CONDITIONS

1.1 PARTIES

This is a Grant Agreement between the Wyre Borough Council (hereinafter called “the Council”) and Citizens Advice Lancashire West (hereinafter called “CALW”).

1.2 OBJECT OF AGREEMENT

The Council wishes to support the services of the CALW for the purpose of providing an information and advice service operated within the aims, principles and policies of the National Citizens Advice subject to an agreed grant and to a defined level of service.

1.3 PERIOD OF AGREEMENT

The Agreement will commence on 1st June 2024 for a period of 4 years unless it is terminated in accordance with paragraph 1.16.

1.4 THE PARTIES’ OBLIGATIONS

1.4.1 CALW agrees to provide the service specified in Part 2 of this Agreement (Service Objectives and Specifications).

1.4.2 The Council agrees to make the grant payments specified in Part 3 of this Agreement (Financial and resourcing arrangements).

1.5 ASSIGNMENT AND NO AGENCY OR PARTNERSHIP

1.5.1 This Agreement is personal to the parties and neither party shall assign, transfer, subcontract or deal in any other matter with any of its rights and obligations under this Agreement without the prior written consent of the other party

1.5.2 Nothing contained in this Agreement, and no action taken by the parties pursuant to this Agreement, will be deemed to constitute a relationship between the parties of partnership, joint venture, principal and agent or employer and employee. Neither party has, nor may it represent that it has, any authority to act or make commitments on the other party’s behalf.

1.6 MANAGEMENT

Responsibility for the management of CALW is vested in the Trustee Board, the membership and operation of which is laid down by a constitution memorandum and Articles of Association.

1.7 PARTIES’ REPRESENTATIVES

The Council and CALW will each appoint a contact officer.

- a) The role of the Council's contact officer is to:
 - Be the initial point of contact within the Council for CALW
 - Inform CALW of any issues, which may have an effect on the implementation of the service provision in this Agreement.
 - Provide information, advice and support to CALW as is reasonably required.
 - Set up monitoring meetings as required with CALW contact officer to consider the information set out in Part 4 of this Agreement.
 - Inform CALW of any change in the Council's contact officer.
- b) The role of CALW's contact officer is to provide the information required in Part 4 of this Agreement and to inform the Council's contact officer, in writing, if there is:
 - a proposal by CALW to change or reduce the services set out in Part 2 of this Agreement;
 - a change to CALW's constitution; or
 - a change in CALW contact officer.
- c) The parties' contact officers will be Director of Communities of the Council and the Chief Executive of CALW.

1.8 DATA PROTECTION

- 1.8.1 CALW shall (and shall procure that any of its staff involved in the provision of the Agreement) comply with any notification requirements under Data Protection legislation (including but not limited to the Data Protection Act 2018 or its replacement) and both parties will duly observe all their obligations under the Data Protection legislation, which arise in connection with the Agreement.
- 1.8.2 Notwithstanding the general obligation in clause 1.8.1 where CALW is processing Personal Data as a Data Processor for the Council, CALW shall ensure that it has in place appropriate technical and contractual measures to ensure the security of the Personal Data (and to guard against unauthorised or unlawful processing of the Personal Data and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, the Personal Data) as required under the Seventh Data Protection Principle in Schedule 1 to the Data Protection Act 2018; and
 - a) Provide the Council with such information as the Council may reasonably require to satisfy itself that CALW is complying with its obligations under the Data Protection Legislation;
 - b) Promptly notify the Council of any breach of the security measures required to put in place pursuant to clause 1.8.2; and
 - c) Ensure it does not knowingly or negligently do or omit to do anything which places the Council in breach of the Council's obligations under the Data Protection Legislation

1.8.3 The provisions of this clause shall apply during the continuance of the Agreement and indefinitely after its expiry or termination.

1.9 STAFFING

1.9.1 Paid and volunteer staff will be recruited and selected with full regard to an equal opportunities policy and procedures approved by National Citizens Advice.

1.9.2 Paid staff will be employed and remunerated with full regard to National Citizens Advice Guidelines.

1.10 QUALITY ASSURANCE

CALW undertakes to operate the quality assurance systems described in Part 2 of this Agreement.

1.11 HEALTH AND SAFETY

CALW shall have regard to the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and any other Acts, Regulations, Directives or Orders etc about health and safety.

1.12 INSURANCES

CALW at its own cost effect and maintain with a reputable insurance company, public liability insurance to cover any liabilities arising from the performance of this Agreement with a minimum cover of £5,000,000. Such certificates shall be made available for inspection to the Council upon request.

1.13 GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION

This Agreement and any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with it or its subject matter or formulation shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the Law of England and Wales.

1.14 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

If either party considers the other to be in breach of their duties under this Agreement or has a grievance about some aspect of the Agreement's operation, the parties shall make every effort to resolve the issue through joint discussions. Where this fails:

- the party wishing to make the complaint should provide the other with written details, including proposals for resolving it;
- a written response should be sent to the initiating party within 14 days;
- if the response is not considered to resolve the issue, the initiating party may request in writing to the contact officer a meeting of the authorised signatories (or their successor);
- where possible the meeting should be held within 14 days of the contact officer receiving the request;

- where the meeting does not resolve the complaint, the issue, should be considered by CALW's Trustee Board or the relevant Council body as a confidential item. Any submissions should be sent in advance to the other party and representation permitted;
- If either party is dissatisfied with the outcome as notified to it in writing within seven days of the meeting, arbitration can be requested and this will take place with a mutually acceptable external party.

1.15 REVIEW

1.15.1 This Agreement may require amendments in the light of experience of implementing its terms. Any amendments will need to be negotiated and agreed in writing by both parties.

1.15.2 The mechanism used for determining the grant set out in Part 3 cannot be the subject of an amendment under 1.15.1.

1.15.3 An annual review of the level of services specified in 2.3 and 2.4 can be requested by either party, and a meeting held as soon as practicable after this. It can take into account changes in community needs, feedback from clients or other stakeholders, changes in the Council's corporate objectives and any other relevant factors beyond the control of CALW, such as the availability of staff.

1.16 RENEWAL

This entire Agreement shall be subject to quarterly monitoring. A formal review will take place in January 2028 with the aim of establishing if the service should continue after the initial period of this Agreement.

1.17 TERMINATION

1.17.1 Failure to comply with this Agreement may result in the Agreement being terminated. This can be requested by either party giving the other party 3 months' notice in writing.

1.17.2 This Agreement can also be terminated for no reason by either party giving the other 6 months' notice in writing.

1.17.3 Any unspent monies relating to the grant are returned to the Council at the end of the notice period.

1.17.4 Notice can be served if delivered by post or e-mailed to the contact officer.

1.18 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

1.18.1 The Council is subject to the FOIA and the EIR ("the Acts"). As part of the Council's duties under the Acts, it may be required to disclose information forming

part of this agreement to anyone who makes a reasonable request. The Council has absolute discretion to apply or not to apply any exemptions under the Acts

1.18.2 CALW shall assist and cooperate with the Council (at CALW's expense) to enable the Council to comply with the information disclosure requirements under the Acts and in so doing will comply with any timescale notified to it by the Council.

1.18.3 The Council shall be responsible for determining at its absolute discretion whether information, (Commercially Sensitive Information and/or any other Information):

1.18.4 is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the provisions of the FOIA or the Environmental Information Regulations; and/or

1.18.5 is to be disclosed in response to a request for information under the Acts.

1.18.6 In no event shall CALW respond directly to a request for information unless expressly authorised to do so by the Council.

1.19 BRIBERY

1.19.1 CALW shall comply with all applicable laws, statutes regulations and codes relating to anti- bribery and anti- corruption but not limited to the Bribery act 2010. Breach of this clause shall be deemed to be a material breach which shall entitle the Council to terminate this agreement without further notice.

PART 2 – SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND SPECIFICATIONS

2.1. AIM OF THE SERVICE

The Citizen Advice service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination. The service aims:

- To provide the advice people need for the problems they face
- To improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

and;

To provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. Value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

2.2 PRINCIPLES UNDER WHICH THE SERVICES ARE PROVIDED

CALW will provide an information and advice service which is:

- free
- confidential
- impartial
- open to all identified recipients regardless of race, gender, sexuality or disability and
- in accordance with the National Citizens Advice guidelines on equal opportunities.

2.3 CORE SERVICES FUNDED UNDER THIS AGREEMENT

The service (to which the funding arrangements in Part 3 relate) offered by CALW shall be 'Assisted Information' and 'General Help' as defined below:

'Assisted Information' is a service in which staff are available to help clients access information and to identify where a client needs further information or advice.

'General Help' is

- Diagnosing the clients problems
- Giving information and explaining options
- Identifying further action the client can take and
- Giving basic assistance e.g. filling in forms, helping the client draft letters and contacting third parties to seek information on the clients behalf.

Where necessary for a particular client, the core service provided by CALW will also include contacting a third party to negotiate on the client's behalf. In accordance with the National Citizens Advice membership agreement the subjects covered will include:

- Consumer
- Money Advice
- Welfare Benefits
- Employment
- Housing
- Family and personal matters
- Taxes
- Immigration and nationality
- Health
- Education

The services covered by the Agreement will not include casework as defined by the Advice Quality Standard (i.e. with casework, the service provider takes responsibility for further action, whereas with a General Help service, the client retains responsibility for the case. Casework also includes representing a client at appeal proceedings where necessary, which General Help does not.)

2.4 MEANS OF ACCESSING THE SERVICE

The core service shall be available face to face and by telephone, online enquiry or letter.

Face to face services will be available at the premises within Fleetwood Market on a Tuesday, Thursday and Friday during normal market hours.

The telephone service is available between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday. The online enquiry service is available 24/7 for clients to submit their enquiry.

Services are not available on Public Holidays.

All these services shall be clearly advertised.

2.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- a) CALW operates the core service to the requirements of the local Performance and Quality Framework.
- b) All staff, both paid and voluntary, are required to undergo relevant training in order to achieve their competent level to a standard acceptable to the Trustees Board, and compatible with the aims, principles, and membership standards of the National Citizens Advice.

2.6 SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

- a) CALW operates to a 3 year plan, the monitoring of which and the results of audits (set out in 4.2 and 4.3) lead to innovation and improvements in its service.

- b) CALW will participate in the activities of the Community Legal Service Partnership, and other relevant networks in order to enhance the services to local residents.
- c) CALW will work to secure additional funding in order to meet unmet needs to for advice amongst the diverse local communities.
- d) CALW will make use of clients' experiences to inform and influence the policy and delivery of other local services, and will inform the Council of relevant issues.

2.7 USER FEEDBACK AND INVOLVEMENT

- a) CALW will operate a procedure for representations and complaints about the service in accordance with the National Citizens Advice guidelines and shall take all reasonable steps to bring this to the attention of the users of CALW.
- b) CALW will undertake an annual clients satisfaction survey.
- c) CALW will consult both clients and potential clients about changes to service provision and opening hours.
- d) The Trustee Board encourages representations from as wide range of local people and organisations as possible.

2.8 CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND CALW'S CONTROL

- a) CALW will not be held responsible for any interruption in or disruption to the core services due to circumstances beyond its control.
- b) The services specified are dependent on the availability of suitable advisers.

PART 3 – FINANCIAL AND RESOURCING ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 The Council has agreed that the annual grant of £35,000 will be paid in two instalments each year – June and December on receipt of invoices submitted by CALW to the Council's Representative.
- 3.2 The CALW will also have the use of up to two units at Fleetwood Market, this equates to approximately £18,000 a year.
- 3.3 No additional amounts (including annual inflationary uplift) will be made to the amount given in 3.1 for the year and subsequent years. The effect of this will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.
- 3.4 This grant shall be construed as being sufficient to fund those core services referred to in Part 2 of this Agreement, and for the purposes of this Agreement are deemed to be CALW's 'core funding'

3.5 CALW agrees to submit, to the Council as part of this Agreement, a copy of its approved accounts, within the meaning of the Charities Act 1992 and 1993.

PART 4 – MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.1 CALW monitors and evaluates its services in accordance with the procedures and directions set out in the National Citizens Advice NACAB Quality Assurance Standards Membership Agreement.
- 4.2 CALW is subject to a two – yearly audit by the National Citizens Advice to ensure the service meets the standards set down in the Quality Assurance Standards Membership Agreements. This audit includes a quality of advice assessment. Continued membership of the National Citizens Advice is dependent on a satisfactory performance in this audit.
- 4.3 The Council will monitor and collate CALW’s activity along with additional information. This will take place on a quarterly basis and consist of:
 - The number of clients accessing the face to face services at the market analysed by event type and ward;
 - The number of clients accessing the telephone and online service analysed by event type and ward;
 - The number and type of complaints received by CALW and number resolved;
 - The number and type of compliments received by CALW;
 - Annual Report, Business Plan/Development Plan;
 - An assessment of client satisfaction;
- 4.4 CALW will provide information as is reasonably required by the Council, subject to those requirements not being in breach of client’s confidentiality. CALW may also be required to provide information to the Councils Overview and Scrutiny Committee as and when requested.
- 4.5 Subject to the National Citizens Advice guidelines these monitoring arrangements can be amended by agreement between the Council and CALW to reflect changes in service practice, for example data collection.
- 4.6 CALW will provide a breakdown of clients accessing the service subject to area of work e.g. benefits, housing, financial services and employment on a quarterly basis

PART 5 - DECLARATION

On behalf of Wyre Borough Council I confirm that I have read the Agreement as set out above and the Council will comply with the terms and conditions contained within.

Signed.....

Date:

Name of authorised signatory for Council:

Address for which communications relating to this Agreement should be sent:

Director of Communities
Wyre Borough Council
Civic Centre
Poulton-le-Fylde
FY6 7PU

On behalf of Citizens Advice Lancashire West I confirm that I have read the Agreement as set out above and CALW will comply with the terms and conditions contained within.

Signed.....

Date:

Name of authorised signatory (ies) for CALW:

Chief Executive
Citizens Advice Lancashire West
35 - 39 Market Street
Chorley
Lancashire
PR7 2SW

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