

Cabinet

**COUNCILLOR HALLEH KOOHESTANI
CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

14th January 2025

Key Decision No

Report No. ACE2503

**REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REGARDING
CITIZENS ADVICE RUSHMOOR (CAR) SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

At the Overview and Scrutiny meeting (OSC) on 12th December 2024, Citizens Advice Rushmoor (CAR) gave a presentation to Members reporting on their performance in line with the Service Level Agreement with the Council.

The Committee recommended that the Cabinet:

- Consider a multi-year funding agreement, taking account of an inflationary increase measure from 2025/26 alongside a clear set of KPI's to measure performance, and
- Review the rental and service charges associated with the places occupied by Citizens Advice Rushmoor in both Aldershot and Farnborough.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. At the Overview and Scrutiny meeting (OSC) on 12th December, Citizens Advice Rushmoor (CAR) gave a presentation to Members reporting on their performance, in line with the Service Level Agreement with the Council.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. The Council has a Service Level Agreement with CAR and provides them with an annual core grant. The existing grant is £189,960

2.2. The grant was reduced by 10% in 2021 with a further 5% reduction in 2022. The grant has not accounted for inflationary pressures.

3. DETAILS

3.1. The presentation from CAR included the following:

- A summary of the services they provide.
- Key projects and activities they deliver including advice trends and case studies of individuals who they have helped.
- Impact of CAR on the local community including number of clients supported and the value of RBC investment.

- Organisational information including clarity on the roles that the RBC grant part funds and the impact on the organisation and its structure following a reduced level of RBC funding in recent years
- The financial challenges to the organisation

Challenges identified by CAR

- 3.2. **Reduced Funding** Due to financial pressures the Council reduced the grant to CA by 10% in 2021 with a further 5% reduction in 2022. This created additional pressure on CAR which led to the need for an organisational restructure. The reduced funding and the increased inflation pressures have been challenging at a time when the demand for services has increased.
- 3.3. **Length of Service Level Agreement:** The Council provides CA with a one-year funding agreement. CAR confirmed that a multi-year funding agreement would help their long-term financial planning and future sustainability.
- 3.4. **Rent Relief:** CAR currently pay £32,652 to lease space at the Council offices, including the reception and £20,250 for the Aldershot premises. The rental cost is placing an increasing pressure on the organisation given the existing financial challenges outlined above.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

- 4.1. In recognition of the Council's financial position and on-going financial challenges the Council's legal advice to date has been to provide a Service Level Agreement for one year only which is reviewed on an annual basis.

Financial Implications

- 4.2. An increase in the core grant or provision of 100% rent relief would have a significant financial impact on the Council.

Equalities Impact Implications

- 4.3 An equalities impact assessment has not yet been undertaken and will follow (if necessary) following consideration of this report.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The Committee recommend that the Cabinet:

- Consider a multi-year funding agreement, taking account of an inflationary increase measure, from 2025/26 alongside a clear set of KPI's to measure performance, and
- Review the rental and service charges associated with the places occupied by Citizens Advice Rushmoor in both Aldershot and Farnborough

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