

Report No.

London Borough of Bromley

CS14123

PART 1 – PUBLIC

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**Decision Maker:** CARE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER  
For pre decision scrutiny by CARE SERVICES POLICY  
DEVELOPMENT & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date:** Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2015

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

**Title:** BROMLEY CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU CONTRACT

**Contact Officer:** Claire Lynn, Strategic Commissioner, Mental Health and Substance Misuse  
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**Chief Officer:** Terry Parkin, Executive Director, Education, Care and Health Services

**Ward:** (All Wards);

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1. Reason for report

This report outlines the contractual arrangements for the provision of general advice and information services in the London Borough of Bromley provided by Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau for the period April 2015 to March 2016.

The report also provides an update on the level of service provided by Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau following changes to the model of service from traditional 'open door' services to a model based on outreach provision, telephone and web access.

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2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**The Care Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note and comment on the proposal.**

**The Portfolio Holder is asked to agree:-**

- (1) The award of a contract for the provision general advice and information service to Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau for a period of one year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.**

## Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy: Building a Better Bromley
  2. BBB Priority: Supporting Independence
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## Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated Cost: £145,000 (2015/16)
  2. Ongoing costs: Proposals is for 2015/16 only
  3. Budget head/performance centre: 813 900 3426
  4. Total current budget for this head: £145,000
  5. Source of funding: ECHS existing Revenue Budget
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## Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): N/A – the Service is provided by an external provider
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Approximately 16 hours per annum Officer time to monitor the contract.
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## Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Government Guidance
  2. Call-in: Applicable:
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## Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Estimated 2000+ people per annum across the borough
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## Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? N/A
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

### **3. COMMENTARY**

#### **3.1 Background**

- 3.1.1 Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau is a voluntary organisation contracted by the Council to provide information, advice and guidance services across a range of issues to the residents of Bromley. Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau is a member of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NCAN) and as such have access to an in depth framework of support and up to date information which enables them to deliver a comprehensive service, this framework is not available to private organisations. Nationally there is a move to establish national help lines and web based information, as with Consumer Direct as an alternative for people to access advice and guidance services. The Citizens Advice Bureau federation is developing a national advice line (phone and web) in line with government policy. The service enables residents in the borough to access support and advice, including advice on benefit entitlement which has had a positive impact on the local economy and reduces the demand on other services.
- 3.1.2 Since 2012/13, Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau has transformed how the service is provided to Bromley residents this has resulted in reducing costs to the Council by 40% over three years. Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau is able to keep its unit costs low because of its extensive use of trained volunteers and specialists. Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau has moved to a mainly telephone and internet based service with key outreach venues without impacting on the number of people being provided with a service. As part of the service transformation the bureaux in Penge and Orpington closed and a number of outreach venues established in these areas. From the monitoring information supplied by Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau, the number of people accessing the outreach provisions in these areas has continued to grow. As a comparison during quarter 4 2013/14 (1<sup>st</sup> January-31<sup>st</sup> March 2014) 509 contacts were made to outreach venues rising to 541 during the first quarter of 2014/15 (1<sup>st</sup> April-30<sup>th</sup> June 2014); an increase of 6%.
- 3.1.3 Officer support is given by the Council to Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau to access other funding, for example the Government funding now available to build less reliance on Council funding.
- 3.1.4 In 2012 an information kiosk was installed in the remaining Bureau at Bromley Town. This has given members of the public easy and instant access to information. In addition, the Bureau re-organised its client processing with greater emphasis on signposting residents to more appropriate organisations or directing members of the public to the information kiosks allowing advisors to focus on the more complex cases.
- 3.1.5 The types of enquiries dealt with by Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau continues to be around issues of benefits, debt, employment, housing and immigration.

### 3.2 New Contract

- 3.2.1 It is not proposed to tender this service as Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau has demonstrated that it can provide a robust and comprehensive service and has the management infrastructure in place to be able to provide the requirements set out in the Service Specification. There are no other organisations which have the nationally recognised brand nor the experience of providing general advice services across a wide area.
- 3.2.2 The current contract expires on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and it is proposed to enter into a new one year contract with Bromley Citizens Advice Service. As with all Council contracts, the contract will include a break clause which would allow the Council to terminate the contract should the provider be in breach or should the Council wish to reconsider the funding position.
- 3.2.3 Officers will continue to maintain quarterly monitoring with Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau, including receiving quarterly monitoring reports during the contract period.

## 4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The provision of advice and information services meets the Council's objectives to enable people to maximise their independence particularly for vulnerable people.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Council funding has reduced by 40% over the life of the current contract. It is proposed that the new contract will be for one year at the current annual contract price . It is proposed that no inflationary increase to Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau for the duration of this Contract would be made. The table below sets out the previous and proposed cost of the contract.

2012/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Contract Price	Contract Price	Contract Price	Contract Price	Contract Price
£	£	£	£	£
249,750	220,000	160,000	145,000	145,000

## 6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Service provided by Bromley Citizens Advice Bureau is a Part B Service for the purpose of Schedule 1 to the Public Contract Regulations 2006. This means that it is not essential to follow the OJEU processes, although in the interest of good practice the Regulations will be shadowed. Award of contract is primarily governed by the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations.

6.2 Rule 3.7 of the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules state “ Where a Service is to be provided by a Voluntary Sector Organisation through an external Service Level Agreement the relevant Chief Officer, in consultation with the Director of Resources, can decide not to obtain competitive tenders or quotations provided that:

- The Chief Officer is satisfied that the Voluntary Sector Organisation is, or will be able to provide a satisfactory quality of Service and that the sums payable under any Service Level Agreement entered into represent Value for Money;
- The relevant Head of Finance keeps a record of all payments made and any Grants received under the Service Level Agreement;
- The Service Level Agreement is time limited and subject to renewal under the arrangements identified in this Rule.

Approvals will be obtained as provided for in Rule 13.1, as appropriate for the estimated total value of the intended arrangement.

Non-Applicable Sections:	<b>PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS</b>
<b>Background Documents:</b>  (Access via Contact Officer)	<a href="http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s11585/Exec-141211Infoadvice%20services.pdf">http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s11585/Exec-141211Infoadvice%20services.pdf</a>  <a href="http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s50005266/Bromley%20Citizens%20Advice%20Bureau.pdf">http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s50005266/Bromley%20Citizens%20Advice%20Bureau.pdf</a>