

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

16th APRIL 2013

Report of the Strategic Director for Children and Younger Adults

**INCOME MAXIMISATION SERVICE
YOUNG PEOPLE**

1. Purpose of the Report

To seek approval for a six month extension to the contract with North East Derbyshire Citizens' Advice Service (CAB) to co-ordinate a county-wide Income Maximisation Service within Derbyshire.

2. Information and Analysis

In June 2008 a 3 year contract was entered into with North East Derbyshire CAB to co-ordinate the delivery of a county-wide income maximisation service to families across Derbyshire. This service includes offering benefits advice, debt management advice, housing advice and fast-track advice for families experiencing domestic violence. This contract was extended for 2 years in April 2011 and is due to expire on 31st March 2013. A six month extension of the contract is requested in order to align the services received under it to a wider review of services being undertaken by Public Health as it moves some its functions into the County Council. This wider review includes services addressing income maximisation.

The Director of Public Health is currently charged with conducting a review of all public health expenditure, and this will include CAB services offered within GP Practices. Derbyshire's success at commissioning CAB in general practice is cited as an example of good practice in reducing health inequalities in the Marmot Review ("Fair Society, Healthy Lives" 2010, p122). Currently 94 out of 102 practices in Derbyshire (including Glossop) have a regular CAB Service. Some 5,857 individuals and families have had their social and financial concerns mitigated through access to GP CAB services.

This represents an excellent opportunity to align the current income maximisation service with any potential service improvements or changes

which will arise out of this wider Public Health review, which will include procurement options. It also supports the implementation of the Derbyshire Health and Well-being Strategy 2012 – 2015.

The service under consideration in this report is delivered via Children's Centres, Multi-Agency Teams and community groups and has delivered significant positive outcomes for children and families in Derbyshire, and complements the GP CAB service by reaching a different but important audience, some of whom would be unlikely to access CAB advice from a GP practice.

In all, the service has helped over 781 families (exceeding the target by 132 families), has helped to re-schedule over £4.5 million of debt (against a target of £1.3 million) and gained over £1 million of benefit/tax credits (against a target of £779,000). Put differently, for every £1 of investment, the service rescheduled £40 of debt and gained £9.43 in benefits or tax credits.

Further, the roll-out of the Government's Welfare Reform programme commences on 1st April 2013. This will not only fundamentally change the types and levels of benefits payable to families, but also the payment regime, and localisation of discretionary payments. The roll-out is likely to lead to a continued demand for these services, at least in the short term, and it is therefore important that income maximisation services continue during this period of transition and reform.

3. Financial considerations

The contract under consideration has an annual value of £114,000. A six month extension to allow it to align with the wider public health review of services as mentioned above, and to address issues arising out of the imminent welfare reforms, would amount to £57,000. This would be financed from the CAYA core budget.

4. Legal Considerations

European Union procurement rules and the Council's Financial Regulations would ordinarily lead the Council to return contracts of the nature and value of this contract with North East Derbyshire CAB to the market rather than entering into further extensions with an incumbent provider. However, limiting the length of the extension to six months to provide for the review of public health services to be completed provides a pragmatic way forward whilst helping to mitigate any procurement risk.

The Local Government Act 1972 states that a local authority may exempt a contract from its standing orders when the authority is satisfied that the

exemption is justified by special circumstances. The Council's Standing Orders permit Cabinet to waive the requirement to seek competitive tenders for services where it is satisfied that there are such special circumstances. The Director of Legal Services has advised that it is justifiable to waive Standing Orders in Relation to Contracts in extending this contract based on the circumstances set out in this report.

5. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered; prevention of crime & disorder, equality of opportunity; and environmental, health, human resources, property and transport considerations.

6. Key Decision

No.

7. Call-in

Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

8. Background Papers

Held by Deputy Head of CAYA Finance.

9. OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet approves a six month extension to the contract with North East Derbyshire CAB for the co-ordination of a county-wide Income Maximisation Service for the period 1st April 2013 to 30th September 2013.

Ian Thomas
Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults