

**SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

**BETWEEN**

**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**AND**

**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE CITIZENS  
ADVICE BUREAU (A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)**

**1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL, 2008– 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH, 2012**

## **SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU**

### **SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT**

#### **1.0 PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT**

1.1 The parties to the Agreement are :-

- South Staffordshire Council ("the Council"), Council Offices, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, South Staffordshire, WV8 1PX.
- South Staffordshire Citizens' Advice Bureau (a Company Limited by Guarantee) (Registered Charity No 1118794, Company No 6051595) (the "Bureau"), Civic Centre, Gravel Hill, Wombourne, South Staffordshire, WV5 9HA.

#### **2.0 DURATION OF THE AGREEMENT**

2.1 This Agreement will be for a term of four years inclusive commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2008 and expiring 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2012.

#### **3.0 PURPOSE OF THE AGREEMENT**

- 3.1 To develop and maintain a full and effective funding and working partnership between the Council and the Bureau in support of the provision of a wholly independent Citizens' Advice Bureau known as South Staffordshire Citizens' Advice Bureau, within and to provide advice, information, and other relevant support to the residents of South Staffordshire.
- 3.2 To ensure the efficient and effective use of the grant aid provided by the Council by the Bureau.
- 3.3 To give, subject to the functions and objectives set out in this Agreement being fulfilled, increased financial security to the Bureau.
- 3.4 To establish the service provision, operational details and management, monitoring and evaluation arrangements etc expected of the Bureau and financial support to be provided by the Council.

#### **4.0 SERVICE PROVISION**

- 4.1 The Bureau will establish and operate advice services within South Staffordshire for the benefit of South Staffordshire residents through a co-ordinated network of outlets.
- 4.2 At least six outlets will be established and maintained throughout the term of this Agreement at Cheslyn Hay, Codsall, Kinver, Penkridge, Perton, and Wombourne or such other locations as may be agreed with the Council.
- 4.3 The outlets will, as a minimum, provide and maintain a total 27 hours of advice per week to the residents of South Staffordshire throughout the term of the Agreement as follows :-

<u>Outlet</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Codsall	3 hours per week open to the public
Cheslyn Hay	6 hours per week open to the public
Kinver	3 hours per week open to the public
Penkridge	3 hours per week open to the public
Perton	6 hours per week open to the public
Wombourne	6 hours per week open to the public

or such other arrangements as may have first been agreed with the Council.

- 4.4 The Bureau will provide through each outlet referred to in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 above, a comprehensive generalist on-site advice service, telephone line and access to all available specialist services including money advice and housing advice, provided or offered by the Bureau.
- 4.5 The Bureau will provide 12 hours of money advice in addition to that (currently 18 hours) being funded by Staffordshire County Council.
- 4.6 The service to be provided by the Bureau will be confidential, independent, impartial, without discrimination and free of charge. The service will be available to all residents of South Staffordshire regardless of circumstance, gender, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability or age, but will also specifically aim to be responsive to the needs of minority and hard to reach groups and individuals and of individuals and groups with special needs.

## **5.0 OPERATIONAL DETAILS/MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

- 5.1 The Bureau will maintain registered charity status throughout the life of this Agreement.
- 5.2 The Bureau will be responsible for managing, establishing, maintaining, servicing, supporting, and developing the services to be provided by it through each outlet or such other outlets that may be provided.
- 5.3 The Bureau will encourage and secure direct local involvement in the support and development of the Bureau and will seek representation thereon and the Management Committee thereof, from (amongst others) the Council, Staffordshire County Council, statutory agencies, the private sector, local organisations, and local individuals.
- 5.4 All note paper, correspondence, publications, leaflets, reports, signage, advertisements etc will clearly indicate that the service is provided by South Staffordshire Citizens' Advice Bureau and that the Bureau is grant aided by South Staffordshire Council.
- 5.5 The Bureau will maintain an account in the name of South Staffordshire Citizens' Advice Bureau to/from which all grants, funds, income and/or expenditure will be passed and/or made and which will be maintained solely for that purpose.

- 5.6 The Bureau will maintain membership of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureau and shall abide by the rules of membership thereof throughout the life of this agreement.
- 5.7 The Bureau will develop and establish employment, equality and equal opportunities, and health and safety and service delivery policies so as to ensure that the service to be provided is fair to all and in keeping with and meets the Bureau's legal responsibilities and needs of the residents of South Staffordshire in these respects.
- 5.8 The Bureau will secure human and all other resources sufficient to provide the services required by and throughout the term of the Agreement.
- 5.9 The determination of the human and other resources required, employment of staff (paid and volunteer) and arrangements for the appointment thereof, salaries, conditions of service and the allocation of duties or procurement of those resources through arrangements to be entered into with other service providers will be matters for the Bureau to determine, save that, where it is proposed that services will be provided by the Bureau through arrangements entered into with other service providers, the concurrence of the Council thereto shall have first been obtained.
- 5.10 The Bureau will maintain the Quality Mark for Legal Services throughout the life of this agreement.

## **6.0 DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.1 The Bureau undertakes to identify the needs of the residents of South Staffordshire.
- 6.2 The Bureau will continue to develop the services provided so as to provide the best possible service to the residents of South Staffordshire in the light of improved working practices, opportunities provided by new technology, new sources of funding etc and in furtherance of this aim will also establish a pool of trained volunteer advisers.
- 6.3 The Bureau will identify gaps in service provision and progress proposals for enhancements to the service to meet those identified needs and secure any additional funding required in that respect.
- 6.4 The Bureau acknowledges that the burden of providing funding should not rest solely upon the Council in perpetuity and will identify and, where possible, access additional sources of funding (e.g. national lottery/national and local charities, private sector) in furtherance of both the maintenance of existing and development of existing and new services within South Staffordshire, the development of the Bureau as an independent bureau, and the aim, by the end of this agreement, to reduce the funding that the Council will be looked to to provide.
- 6.5 The Bureau will, within the life of this agreement, seek to obtain the award of the Quality Mark for legal services at additional levels to that currently held.

## **7.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

- 7.1 It is agreed and recognised that monitoring and evaluation will be essential to ensuring that the arrangements and services set out in this Agreement are achieved and that public money is spent carefully, appropriately and effectively.

To this end the Bureau will ensure that consistent monitoring arrangements including client profiling, equal opportunities and equalities related information, user satisfaction surveys and workload measurement etc are established.

- 7.2 The Bureau will publish a South Staffordshire Citizens' Advice Bureau annual report and audited accounts within six months of the end of each financial year of this Agreement.
- 7.3 The annual report will clearly indicate the services being provided and level at which they are operating, identifying in particular the number of clients assisted together with the number of issues dealt with in each year and at each outlet, the successes achieved and progress made in development work and will also include equalities related data/information.
- 7.4 An annual review of this Agreement will take place in November of each year or, at such other time as may be determined by the appropriate portfolio holder at South Staffordshire Council to be attend by representatives of the Council, and the Bureau.
- 7.5 The annual review will cover all aspects of the operation of this Agreement and which may result in the Agreement being amended by mutual consent.
- 7.6 Either party to this Service Level Agreement may request a review of its provisions at any stage if it should appear that it is not working satisfactorily having regard to the purpose it is intended to achieve.

## **8.0 GRANT AID**

- 8.1 In consideration of the services to be provided under this Agreement the Council will provide funding as follows :-

Year

Financial year commencing 1 <sup>st</sup> April, 2008	£57,900
Financial year commencing 1 <sup>st</sup> April, 2009	£78,700
Financial year commencing 1 <sup>st</sup> April, 2010	£78,700
Financial year commencing 1 <sup>st</sup> April, 2011	£78,700

- 8.2 The Bureau will explore the best use of resources and opportunities for gaining added value (including through sharing best practice and joint working) in order to achieve best value in the use of the funding provided by the Council for the provision of the services to be provided under this Agreement on behalf of and for the benefit of the residents of South Staffordshire and will seek to achieve savings wherever possible. Any savings achieved as a result of a non-provision of the service (in whole or in part) to be provided under this Agreement will be clearly identified in the accounts and will not be expended without the approval of the Council having first been obtained.

- 8.3 The grant aid to be provided by the Council is inclusive of inflation.
- 8.4 The grant aid provided by the Council is restricted funding and will only be used for the provision of the services set out in this Agreement.
- 8.5 The Council does not bind itself to provide funding beyond the term of this Agreement. Any application for further funding must be made at least six months prior to the expiry of this agreement and the Council's financial year.
- 8.6 The Council's grant will be paid yearly in advance on 1<sup>st</sup> April in each year of the Agreement.
- 8.7 The payment of the grant to be provided by the Council will be subject to budgetary provision therefore having first been approved by the Council in respect of each ensuing financial year.
- 8.8 The Bureau acknowledges the support in kind given by the Council through the Council's Director of Finance in the carrying out of salaries administration on behalf of the Bureau in respect of its employees (valued at £1,000 per year on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2008), the continuation of such support to be entirely at the discretion of the Director of Finance in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

**9.0 EXPLICIT ASPECTS OF THIS AGREEMENT**

- 9.1 South Staffordshire Citizens' Advice Bureau will be an independent organisation and will not be influenced by the Council in respect of action taken on behalf of individual clients and/or in pursuance of its service aims.
- 9.2 The Council reserves the right to withdraw its grant aid in total or in part if the service provisions specified in this Agreement are not delivered in whole or in part.

Signed on behalf of  
SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

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Councillor B. R. Edwards – Leader of  
the Council, South Staffordshire  
Council

Signed on behalf of  
SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE  
CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU

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Mr D. Hough - Chairman, South  
Staffordshire Citizens Advice Bureau

Date : 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2008