



COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SERVICES 6 DECEMBER 2006

Report of the Community Commission

DERBY CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU AND LAW CENTRE

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Commission a) recommends that the Council should not reduce the current aggregate of funding to the two current organisations after their merger and b) reaffirms the previous recommendation of the former Community Regeneration Commission made on 21 March 2006, namely:

That Council Cabinet should be prepared to *consider* an increase in the level of grant in future years to the (probably) amalgamated Citizen's Advice Bureau[CAB]/Law Centre in the following circumstances:

- a) the economies of scale available to the combined organisation have been fully utilised to deliver efficiencies
- b) the savings released are partly used to augment the financial management capacity and
- c) firm evidence is provided of continuing unmet need.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 On 13 September a report including the above recommendations was considered at the Individual Council Cabinet Meeting by Councillor Hussain. The minute of the 13 September meeting was reported to the 2 October meeting of the Community Commission. It included this wording:

The Cabinet Member felt that it was important to allow the merger of the CAB and the Law Centre to take place before considering the need to increase the grant. He felt that it would be difficult to commit to increasing any funding at this stage of the budget process for 2007/08 when the Council had to reduce its overall budget.

Resolved to note the Commissions recommendations.

- 2.2 At the Chair and Vice Chair's pre-agenda meeting it was decided that there would be merit in inviting the Council's representatives on the management committees of both the CAB and the Law Centre to obtain their views on the proposed merger. Cllr Nath and Cllr Gerrard attended on 2 October while other Council representatives submitted apologies for absence.
- 2.3 Cllr Nath and Cllr Gerrard explained the reasons for the amalgamation. In essence it was a necessary response to a funding review by the Legal Services Commission. This would see a single franchise in each area to provide a one-stop centre or network of community legal advice. Traditional providers would have to compete with other bidders which may be national, commercial organisations. Merger of the CAB and Law Centre, leading to a more robust bid, was expected to be completed in late 2006 or early 2007.
- 2.4 The Commission later deliberated and decided to i) wish good luck to the new single organisation, ii) welcome the opportunity for closer partnership working with organisations like Derby Advice and Derbyshire Housing Aid, iii) recommend the Council does not reduce the current aggregate of funding to the two current organisations after their merger and iv) reaffirm the recommendations made by the former Community Regeneration Commission on 21 March 2006.

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. As set out in the report that resulted from the 21 March 2006 meeting.

Legal

- 2 As above.

Personnel

- 3 As above.

Equalities impact

- 4 As above.

Corporate Priorities

- 5 As above.