

**1 Purpose of Report**

- (a) To introduce the presentation from the Nene Valley Citizens Advice Bureau (NVCAB).
- (b) The presentation relates to the work this organisation does in the Borough in support of the Council's priorities, particularly that of delivering efficient and responsive services.

**2 Executive Summary**

Not applicable.

**3 Appendices**

None, but copies of any slides will be provided to the Committee.

**4 Proposed Action:**

- 4.1 The Committee is invited to discuss issues relating to the work of Nene Valley Citizens Advice Bureau and identify any matters going to the discharge of any functions of the Council, or that affect the Borough or its inhabitants, which they RECOMMEND be drawn to the attention of the relevant policy committees.**

**5 Purpose of Report**

This presentation forms part of the general programme of review agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010.

**6. Discussion**

- 6.1 The Citizens Advice service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination. Its aims are to provide the advice people need for the problems they face, and to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.
- 6.2 At 1 April 2010 there are 390 Citizens Advice Bureaux across England and Wales. They are all members of Citizens Advice, the membership organisation - also an independent registered charity - that provides training and support to member bureaux, and coordinates national policy work. Together they make up the Citizens Advice service.

- 6.3 The NVCAB is a generalist advice service. It gives free, confidential, impartial and independent advice and information on a wide range of subjects, such as
- (a) Benefits
  - (b) Debt
  - (c) Consumer Issues
  - (d) Housing
  - (e) Employment
- 6.4 In addition to general advice it can also offer specialist advice services such as:
- (a) Legal advice
  - (b) Welfare rights
  - (c) Financial inclusion
  - (d) Homelessness
  - (e) Home visiting for elderly and disabled clients
- 6.5 The presentation this evening will be given by Lynn Lavender and will focus on the work done by NVCAB in the Borough.

## **7 Legal Powers**

- 7.1 The Local Authorities (Alternative Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2001 empower the Council to establish one or more overview and scrutiny committees. An overview and scrutiny committee of a local authority may invite persons other than Members or Officers of the authority to attend meetings of the committee.

## **8 Financial and Value For Money Implications**

- 8.1 There are no such implications arising directly from this report. However, effective overview and scrutiny is one of the means by which the Council secures effective use of its resources.

## **9 Risk Analysis**

Normally a risk table is completed for any report setting out a proposed course of action that entails risks at the outset of the project or if the risks change along the way.

This is not relevant here so the table has not been completed

## **10 Implications for Resources**

- 10.1 There are no such implications arising directly from this report other than Officer time required to prepare any reports that might be needed to policy committees as a result of the Committees findings.

## **11 Implications for Stronger and Safer Communities**

- 11.1 There are no such implications arising directly from this report. However, effective overview and scrutiny is one of the means by which the Council secures improvements in the discharge of its functions that contribute to making its community stronger and safer.

**12 Implications for Equalities**

- 12.1 Local scrutiny of public services improves the ability of the Council to ensure equalities issues affecting the local community are taken into account by other public service providers.

**13 Author and Contact Officer**

Chris Pittman, Head of Partnerships, Policy and Property

**14 Consultees**

None.

**15 Background Papers**

None.

