



NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AREA COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPROVAL FORM

1. Committee: **Baldock & District Area Committee**2. Date: **6 Jun 2016**3. Summary of application: **Funding support to move to new Head Office premises**Name of organisation: **Citizens Advice North Herts (CANH)**Sum requested: **£1,860**Total project cost: **£20,000 (NHDC)**

Brief details:

CANH are seeking grant funding of £20,000 from North Hertfordshire District Council towards the cost of the fixtures and fittings for the new premises.

The new premises contains the last remaining original Parker and Unwin shop front in Letchworth, and the LGC Heritage Foundation has agreed to pay for an external refurbishment and internal strip out of the building, to include new heritage windows and restoration of the original shop front. The CANH will pay for the creation of four new interview rooms, flooring, lighting, power and data, additional desks, chairs and telephones, security alarm, an accessible toilet, as well as upgrades to kitchen, toilets, heating and ventilation systems.

The relocation is required as they need more space and a secure long-term home. The current Letchworth office has a tiny waiting room, not enough interview rooms, no training room and nowhere near enough desk space for staff and volunteers.

Matched / linked funding: **£40,000 est**Funder: **Letchworth GC Heritage Foundation**Matched /linked funding : **£18,140**
or DRRFunder: **NHDC Area Committees**

Comments from Community Officer:

In 2015, Citizens Advice North Herts supported almost 5,400 individual clients with over 11,000 issues (up from 4,500 with 10,000 issues in 2014/15). 10% of clients are from the Baldock area covered by the local area committee. The CANH's digital advice screen in the Baldock Community Centre is well used and allows residents to access the information they need, enabling the service to manage increasing demands on the service. For those who need in-depth advice, most residents from this area use the main office in Letchworth or call for telephone advice. The move to the new premises in Station Road will allow them to meet growing demand both for face-to-face and telephone services, and train volunteers from across the district.

Benefits for clients from this area in 2015 included over £102,000 in financial outcomes generated. Broken down by ward this equated to £11,000 for Arbury residents, £56,000 in Baldock Town, and £35,000 in Weston and Sandon. Most of this relates to securing disability benefits for those who need this support. These benefits make a huge difference to quality of life, and reduce the demand on health, statutory and other voluntary sector services. While national success rates for Disability Living Allowance applications are 60%, our specialist caseworkers and highly-trained volunteers have a near 100% success rate.

NB - This grant application was brought before the Letchworth Councillors in March and grant funding of £8,415 has been provided from its discretionary budgets. On the recommendation of members and on the basis that the service covers all of the District, the remaining £11,585 is being sought from the other four Area Committees and divided by per capita percentage.

The Community Development Officer has examined this application against the Authority's Area Grants Policy, the organisation's accounts and grant history, and considers it an eligible application.

Amount recommended: **£1,860**