

SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR

Health & Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and General Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday 24 November 2014

**The Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square,
Hereford, HR1 2HX**

This supplement contains questions received in advance of the meeting from the public and officer responses. Please note that public questions form part of the Health and Social Care Overview Scrutiny Committee at 10.00am.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC ON BUDGET 2015/16 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The following questions have been received and responses provided by officers.

Questions from Claire Keetch, Chief Executive, Herefordshire Citizens Advice Bureaux. Responses from Helen Coombes, Director for Adults and Wellbeing.

Question 1 In relation to the Draft Savings Proposals shown for the Economy, Communities & Corporate Directorate, (page 34 of the agenda pack), can the Committee confirm how the identified savings listed against “Removal of funding to HVOSS, HALC and CAB” in the “New Savings Plans” i.e. £40,000 in 2015/2016 and £117,000 in 2016/2017, totalling £157,000 over the two year period, specifically affect the Citizens Advice Bureau? As the savings totals appear to relate to three separate organisations, it is currently unclear what the separate savings proposal is for each identified organisation.

I have already asked this question of the Director for Economy, Communities and Corporate, but regret that I did not receive a clear response.

Response 1 A full response has been provided to The Chief Executive of the CAB, by the Director for Adults and Wellbeing please see letter attached. The total amount that will not be paid to CAB is £ 117,460.

Question 2 Given that I am advised that the Director of Adults and Wellbeing is now the lead on advice services, can the Committee confirm that Herefordshire Citizens Advice Bureau’s existing Service Level Agreement, (SLA), associated Cabinet responsibility, and budget of £117,456 ¹ has transferred to the Adults and Wellbeing Directorate?

¹ Appreciating that the full grant amount may have been apportioned across Directorates if the transfer took place after 01 April 2014.

Response 2 The responsibility transferred on the 1st April 2014, as has been confirmed to the Chief Executive of the CAB a number of times this year the budget for administrative purposes continues to sit within the EEC budget, but is managed by AWB where commissioning responsibility sits for information, advice and guidance.

Question 3 Bearing in mind the query already raised in Question 1, can the Committee clarify, why savings proposals for the CAB are listed at all within the Economy, Communities & Corporate Directorate, if the current grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau and associated Service Level Agreement have moved to the Adults and Wellbeing Directorate?

I cannot see any identifiable savings proposals for the CAB listed under Adults and Wellbeing Directorate (page 32 of the agenda pack).

Response 3 As explained in Response 2 for administrative ease the budget has not physically moved and hence why the saving is still shown within the EEC budget savings proposals.

Claire Keetch
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Our Ref: HC/MS
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19 November 2014

Dear Claire

Herefordshire Council Citizens Advice Bureaux Letter 12 November 2014

Your letter to Geoff Hughes has been passed to myself to respond. As you are aware Adults & Well Being now leads on the commissioning of advice services for the council and you and I have been involved in a number of discussions during the past year where it has been confirmed to you that the current grant arrangements for your organisation will not be continuing past March 2014.

The council's medium term financial strategy does set out high level savings plans but may change as other pressures emerge and national policy changes. Due to other pressures such as increasing demand for residential and nursing care that have emerged during this year we are having to bring forward savings plans across the council in order to make sure that the council can set a balanced budget. It also has to fund new responsibilities and duties such as the requirement for the council to have in place as a result of the Care Act and Children's & Families Act robust information, advice and advocacy function for all ages.

I can confirm that the annual grant amount of £ 117,460 will end on 31 March 2015.

As you are aware the council will be going through a commissioning and procurement process to establish a single access point for information and advice for all ages to meet our new duties, and we are looking very carefully at other areas that have already established models based in the third sector, which are demonstrating considerable success. With our health colleagues we are very keen that this procurement also includes a sign-posting service to all of the other information and advice provision which exists across Herefordshire. Our timescale for implementation for this as you are aware is the 31st March 2015. We will be shortly preparing a report for Cabinet Lead Member decision to enable us to commence this process, ensuring that the decision is informed by evidence of need, an understanding of the current provision available, and the impacts of the proposed change in provision model.

In addition to this commissioning process Herefordshire Council continues to fund a welfare rights service, and in partnership with National Lottery funding that has been secured for Herefordshire, which should be funding a range of information and advice activity. The

council will require clarity about this spend before the required National Lottery Partnership Agreement is signed by the council. We will of course continue to be providing your accommodation at no cost to your organisation but is a cost to the council of at least £75 k as a contribution to our ongoing support towards your organisation in Herefordshire

As we have discussed I would encourage you to enter into the commissioning process, the Citizens Advice Bureaux has a national and local brand that is trusted, and whilst it will be a competitive process it would be very positive to see a submission from your organisation. I cannot confirm the contract length at this point but it will be sufficient to give the successful organisation a level of sustainability that grants can never give. The council recognises the valuable role your organisation delivers and would hope that this would continue.

I hope this response answers your questions, please do come and talk to myself or Ewen Archibald Lead Commissioner if you have any further queries

Yours sincerely,



HELEN COOMBES
DIRECTOR FOR ADULTS AND WELLBEING

Cc , Denise Shuker, Chair of Trustee Board, Herefordshire CAB

Councillor Tony Johnson, Council Leader

Councillor Graham Powell, Cabinet Lead Adults & Well Being

Geoff Hughes, Director for Economy Communities and Corporate