

At a Special Meeting of the **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Meeting Room 3, the Council Offices, Kilworthy Park, Drake Road, **TAVISTOCK** on **THURSDAY** the **27<sup>th</sup>** day of **NOVEMBER 2014** at **2.30 pm**

**Present:**

	Cllr D E Moyse – Vice-Chairman	
Cllr K A Clish Green		Cllr C Hall
Cllr D K A Sellis		Cllr D Whitcomb

Community Manager  
Member Services Manager

**In Attendance:** Cllrs W G Cann OBE, A F Leech and C R Musgrave

**\*O&S 25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M V L Ewings, Cllr L J G Hockridge, Cllr D M Horn, Cllr J B Moody and Cllr J Sheldon.

**\*O&S 26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members and officers were asked to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of this meeting but none were made.

**\*O&S 27 CAB UPDATE – PRESENTATION FROM STEPHEN DAVIS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF TORRIDGE, NORTH, MID AND WEST DEVON**

The Chief Executive, Mr Davis, began by apologising for being unable to attend the previous meeting, and also by introducing his Chairman, Mr John Silver.

Mr Davis presented a powerpoint presentation in a ‘dashboard’ style that included information relating to both the Tavistock and Okehampton offices of the CAB. (Post Meeting Note: the presentation has since been circulated to Members for their information).

Members asked a number of questions and points during the presentation and these included the following:

- One Member asked if there had been an impact as a result of the welfare reforms. Mr Davis responded that there had not been much of an impact yet but there were concerns about the introduction of Universal Credit which was due to roll out during the spring;
- Mr Davis did advise Members that a recent area of support was to residents in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance as they were increasingly expected to interact online and the CAB was looking at how to facilitate this;

- In response to queries about the generic 'Advice Line' number, Mr Davis advised that Devon County Council was keen to continue with this but from 1 April 2015 it would be more structured.

There would be a need for the bureau to respond to more calls and there could be capacity issues. In addition, many volunteers wanted to help people on a face to face basis, they did not volunteer to sit in a 'call centre' environment. Volunteers were now recruited on the basis of supporting clients in a number of different formats;

- Mr Davis outlined how someone needing a face to face appointment would be helped if the call was taken elsewhere within Devon;
- In response to concerns that the bureau was not answering enough calls Mr Davis advised that other providers were being looked at to see if they could assist, for example Consumerline;
- Mr Davis explained that volunteers able to assist with debt relief orders had to be registered with HMRC and debt issues were difficult to resource. Some clients found it hard to introduce the necessary discipline but the bureau could not continue to support them indefinitely;
- Mr Davis advised that Okehampton would be a prime office for the delivery of the Advice Line service and Key Performance Indicators would be set. The service would be changing drastically. There were 11 offices that could be used for face to face appointments but the need for static offices would diminish and there was a need to be able to utilise 'pop up' offices;
- Mr Davis confirmed that there was no intention to withdraw the service from Tavistock. The bureau was keen to make changes that would ensure the long term sustainability of the service in West Devon;
- Members discussed the impact of the change in opening hours on volunteers and the need to recruit volunteers who could work in a new way. Going forward, Mr Davis expect the bureau to undertake more commissioning and scrutinise how it can deliver services in a more effective way';
- A Ward Member for Okehampton East raised concerns following the changes that had taken place within the Okehampton office. The Chairman of the CAB responded to the points raised and confirmed that people could attend the Board meetings that were held;
- Finally, Members recognised the importance of the CAB as an organisation and how the Borough Council would come under more pressure if the CAB did not exist.

(The meeting terminated at 4.15 pm)