

21st February 2022

Joint Communications to All Councillors following CAW meeting

Citizens Advice and Waverley had a productive meeting this week to discuss the funding arrangements for the next financial year. This meeting was a follow up to previous discussions that have taken place as we transition from the previous Service Level Agreement funding to the delivery requirements of the Thriving Communities Commissioning Fund.

Constructive discussions between the Chair of Trustees and the Chief Executive of CAW and WBC have been on-going and have centred around changes to the funding scheme to ensure that any service model and funding requests meet the priorities of this new fund. Officers have expressed the need for CAW to include an outreach model for delivery of their services in their application. Both organisations remain focused on the issues related to debt, budgeting and benefits advice, which have worryingly increased during the pandemic.

Applications to the Thriving Communities Commissioning Fund were assessed by an experienced multi agency panel which included Surrey County Council, a member of the Waverley Executive and a member of the Principal Opposition Party. The fund was, understandably, considerably oversubscribed. The fund is aimed at core strategic issues identified in the Waverley Corporate Strategy.

At the time of the panel meeting SCC were able to advise Waverley that a grant had been given to Citizens Advice Surrey for a one-year project to deliver debt advice which fits very well with the Thriving Communities Commissioning Fund and the growing problem of debt in the wake of Covid. CAW signed an agreement in January 2022 for a £50k share of this funding which is a restricted fund which must be used to employ an additional, full- time paid debt adviser and to train 2 volunteers. This will provide vital services for residents of Waverley who are also Surrey residents and is in line with Waverley's priorities.

At the meeting this week, we discussed the work to date on the delivery model and the ongoing development of this work that both organisations could work on together. The following funding was agreed in principle – £150k From the Thriving Communities Commissioning Fund, supplemented by £50k from SCC and an additional £40k in principle from COMF funding to support in the transition to the provision of outreach to communities with debt advice, budgeting and benefits advice. This enables CAW to maintain a continued presence in Haslemere and Cranleigh for the next financial year.

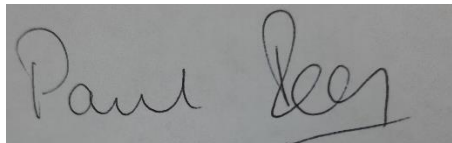
Both CAW and SCC are cognisant of the need to ensure that the public fund is spent appropriately and that communities of Waverley in Surrey have access to outreach services – a particular challenge in a largely rural Borough. We have therefore both agreed that CAW will ensure that outreach work is carried out across the Borough covering the four main settlements.

We are aware that other time limited contracted services such as Help to Claim and the Department of Work and Pensions have come to an end and that these contracts have either not been renewed or have been awarded to another organisation. This we understand is part of the routine procurement of these types of services and are unconnected with the Waverley Thriving Communities Commissioning Fund or Waverley Borough Council.

At the meeting this week, we discussed the work to date on the delivery model and the ongoing development of this work that both organisations could work on together. Both Citizens Advice and Waverley concluded that the meeting was positive and had enabled a constructive discussion about the deliverables going forward and hence this joint statement.



Cllr Paul Follows
Leader of the Council



Paul Rees
Chair of Trustee Board Citizens Advice Waverley