



Report to
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

6 January 2010

Report of
Councillor Mrs Bigham

Title
Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – Coventry Law Centre Limited

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out details of the work of The Coventry Law Centre over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Coventry City Council should nominate two elected members due to the nature of its work and the level of financial support from the City Council.

3 Information on Work of Outside Body

- 3.1 The Coventry Law Centre states it's purpose as 'To fight social exclusion in communities And to effect change in society by increasing rights awareness and using legal processes to fight poverty, inequality and discrimination.'
- 3.2 The Coventry Law Centre provides legal advice in the areas of Community Care, Disability, Employment, Immigration and Asylum, Discrimination and Housing. 'Debt Advice is a new service that was launched at the end of the year. It is a welcome addition because the demand for debt service at the moment is exceeding capacity at all agencies across the city. Debt advice complements particularly the work of the Welfare Benefits and Housing teams as many clients will have problems in all three areas.' (Annual Impact Report)
- 3.3 'During 2008/2009 we received just over £400,000 from the Legal Services Commission to undertake casework for those people who are eligible for legal aid, and just under £500,000 from Coventry City Council which allows us to undertake work that is not funded by LSC.' (Annual Impact Report)
- 3.4 The Coventry Law centre produces an Annual Impact Report and the 2008-2009 report will be available for public inspection. The report details achievements from 2008-2009 with examples of the work that was done and how it was achieved.
- 3.5 The Coventry Law Centre continues 'to play a leading role in Advice Services Coventry (ASC).' The director of the Law Centre co-chairs this partnership The group has been successful in bidding as a partnership for monies to strengthen advice services in the city.'

3.6 'We continue to feel the effects of the recession. Our case numbers are a further 20% up on last year – which saw an increase of about 15% on the previous year. The increases are mainly in debt (because it's new), housing and employment.' Sue Bent

4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment

4.1 Members are able to set the direction for the Centre, are able to scrutinize annual accounts and are responsible for electing the Trustees who make up the Management Committee of the Law Centre.

5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

5.1 The Coventry City Council's representatives on Coventry Law Centre Limited are Councillors Mrs Bigham and Lapsa. In the period December, 2008 and November, 2009 inclusive there were 8 Board meetings held of which only Councillor Mrs Bigham was entitled to attend and she attended 7. Both Councillor Mrs Bigham and Councillor Lapsa attended the AGM.

5.2 There is no remuneration associated with the appointment.

List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper	Location
Schedule of City Council Appointments to outside Bodies	CH60