



Coventry City Council

# 7.6

## Public report

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**Report to**

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

17<sup>th</sup> February, 2010

**Report of**

Councillor Gazey

**Title**

Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau Management Board

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**1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 A process of reporting back to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on the work of those outside bodies appointed to by the City Council is in place. This report sets out details of the work of Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau over the preceding twelve months, as well as details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend that the City Council continue to nominate one Member to the Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau Management Board.

**3 Information on Work of Outside Body**

- 3.1 Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau is a progressive Bureau, working towards meeting current and future advice needs in the City. Funding streams including the City Council, Coventry Teaching Primary Care Trust, the Legal Services Commission, the European Regional Development Fund, ICAS (Department of Health) and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Financial Inclusion Fund, have meant that the Bureau has been able to provide a wide range of both specialist and generalist services to the communities of Coventry over the previous twelve months.

Coventry CAB provides a specially trained and unique service to those in need of personal advice and support. This is a distinctive part of the Council's policy of supporting people. Job advice up 500% by Xmas, fuel debt 133% for 2009.

- 3.2 Funding in its various forms continues to be a high priority for the Bureau. The Board of Trustees have spent time on short term budget planning and the resulting HR challenges stemming from funding fall out and changes to contracting arrangements. They have also engaged in longer term business planning and a renewal of core objectives supported by National CAB. This work has dovetailed into the work across the City on the new Advice Strategy for Coventry. A new Chief Executive has been appointed. A vigorous reorganisation of its services followed and a move to new, more publicly accessible headquarters at Kirby House ensued, providing a better venue to those in need. CAB has met this challenge and provides an improved service to the general public so considerably supporting Council policy.

3.3 The Coventry CAB continues to represent the voluntary sector on the Coventry Partnership and on its Equalities and Communities Theme Group; this has enabled the voluntary sector's perspective to be put forward in partnership work with statutory and other partners.

3.4 This year has been a particularly difficult and challenging year with funding streams dropping out, the need to seek new identity for core services and the search for new premises all being issues to be dealt with. Despite these problems, the budget is healthier than previously and the Coventry CAB is confident it can continue to provide an essential service by trained and professional staff to people in need of advice and help.

#### **4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment**

4.1 The Citizens Advice Bureau is one of a number of advice services funded by the City Council; membership of the Board of Trustees ensures that the Council is involved in determining the policy of the Bureau and ensures involvement in performance monitoring and management of resources.

#### **5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment**

5.1 The Coventry City Council's representative on the Coventry Citizens Advice Bureau Management Board is Councillor Gazey. In the period from January, 2009 to December, 2009 inclusive there have been 6 Trustee Board meetings held and Councillor Gazey attended 2 of these meetings. Councillor Gazey also attended the AGM held in November, 2009 and a Trustee Board "Away Day" in April, 2009.

5.2 There is no remuneration associated with this appointment.

#### List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

<b>Description of paper</b>	<b>Location</b>
Schedule of City Council Appointments to Outside Bodies	CH60