**Citizens Advice Watford**

**Trustee Board Meeting**

**Tuesday 15 January 2019 - 6pm**

**Watford Advice Centre – Minutes PART 1**

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|  | Minutes PART 1 | |
|  | **Standard Items** |  |
|  | **Present**  Stephen Herman (SH) Chair  Roland Bedford (RB) Company Secretary  Pui Wah Carter (PWC) Treasurer  George Derbyshire (GD)  Farrukh Siddiqi (FS)  Fikile Mkoyana (FM) (part only)  Salim Bakirci (SB) Chief Officer  Rosie Woodhouse (minutes)  Laurence Blake (LB) prospective new trustee  Meera Lakhani (ML) prospective new trustee  **Apologies**  Gail Tendler (GT)  Stephen Cavinder (SC)  Catherine Markowski (CM) ASM / Staff Representative  Geoff Dennis (GDennis) Volunteer Representative  **Introductions**  LB and ML were welcomed to the meeting as prospective new trustees. |  |
|  | **Conflict of interests**  None |  |
|  | **Minutes**   1. **Board Meeting held on 4 Sep 2018**  * **Strategy day**   The agenda has been sent out and sessions organised. Suggestions were invited from staff and volunteers but none were received. Catherine will provide an update following her visits to other LCA’s.   * **Fair competition policy**   This is now in place.   * **Case checking**   Catherine will update on her return from leave.  The minutes of the meeting on 4 September 2019 were agreed by the Board and signed by the Chair.   1. **Matters arising**   None |  |
|  | **Decisions by email since last meeting**   * **EBDx Funding**   No direct staffing costs are allocated so existing capacity is being used. Funding is generous (£4,500) and targets low (30 clients). Ratified.   * **Disability Benefits Funding**   This is a continuation of the existing project funded by HCF, now funded by a different charitable foundation and delivered with three other LCA’s. Funding is £10,000 to cover staff costs and the project runs from December 2018 – November 2019. All projects are costed on a full cost recovery (FCR) basis as the starting point except this project which will only cover the staffing costs. Ratified.   * **Universal Credit**   Funding for this project comes directly from the DWP to CitA and is then allocated locally. The TGA and UC outreach worker roles will be used for this project with some additional capacity. This will be delivered for the first time as national initiative and includes national webchat. LAs are getting similar funding and there was concern they would cut their funding to LCAs but assurances have been received from CitA that this will not happen. The funding is generous (£25,000 at FCR plus) but there is the potential for impact when the funding is no longer available next year. Ratified.   * **Purchase of the server**   To avoid labour costs of £3,500 the server was replaced with a new one carrying a 3 year guarantee. We should consider back up fire safe drives for extra security or cloud back up, but this is costly and we are already using the google drive. Approval for replacement of server. Ratified.   * **Remuneration committee appointments**   Following the retirement of James Tyerman from the Board, GD takes over as chair of remuneration committee from the 1st January 2019. His appointment was approved by the board retrospectively. |  |
|  | **Assurance Items** |  |
|  | 1. **Q3 Management Accounts**   These were circulated and an error was identified in line 3 which should read ‘deficit’. The accounts show we are largely ahead of budget. The Rough Sleeping Intervention Project funds were paid in advance so it appears there is a surplus when there isn’t. The cost of the new server was £4,500 which will show in the accounts for January, but we will still finish the year ahead of budget. Also staff costs are lower than budgeted for.   1. **Dec 18 Financial Report**   See above   1. **CitA’s Finance Dashboard**   We are in the green band.   1. **Draft Budget for 2019/20**   This is not the final version as the current level of expenses will be updated for the board meeting in April. |  |
|  | 1. **Balanced Scorecard (KPI’s)**   The KPI’s are based on the targets in the business plan. Client numbers were down in December due to IT issues and holidays so f2f targets were not met. Turnaways and missed appointments were fewer because of the Christmas closure. 75% of demand was met f2f and 40% telephones. The telephone service was adversely affected by the IT issues. 12 new volunteers will start in January but the telephone gateway assessor will be allocated to Help to Claim calls so this will have an impact the number of calls answered. One third of people are currently turned away - CM will address this on her return from leave.   1. **PQF Dashboard (Quarterly trends)**   Universal credit is the new emerging issue at 7% of enquiries but there is no increase in benefit issues overall. The quarterly score is green but the annual dashboard yellow. We will explore the discrepancy. The quality of the client experience is paramount.   1. **Leadership Self-assessment**   We scored the highest possible score in all nine areas and achieved the Advice Quality Standards Mark which is good for funding. | CM |
|  | **Risk Assessment**   * **Management of IA risks**   The risk register was discussed. Two 2 risks are closed, these are GDPR and a possible ET by a former employee which is closed because the time limit has passed. Risks still open are the ability to meet demand and funding. The failed server was added to the risk register and two risks were added from council list. |  |
|  | **Health and Safety Report**  The Fire Safety Assessment report was received. Some issues were raised including door guards for every room. Funding is currently being sought for this. | SB |
|  | **Information Assurance Review**  It is a CitA requirement that this is undertaken every year. The upgrade to Windows 10 is a huge investment requiring additional funding. |  |
|  | **Policy and Decision Items** |  |
|  | **Policies for approval**   1. **Risk Management Policy**   A new template from CitA is awaited which meets our needs. Not yet ready for approval.   1. **Fair Competition Policy**   This applies to Watford only. The CitA model favours competing for funding with other LCAs but the membership agreement precludes this. SB has produced protocols to manage internal competition. Approved.   1. **Financial procedures**   This is the same policy but with one amendment - the limit for SB to sign cheques is raised, which reduces admin costs. Approved.   1. **Reserves Policy**   The figure required by CitA is the figure on reserves (not 6 months operational costs). This is 150,000 (to be reviewed annually). Approved. | SB |
|  | **Information/Discussion Items** |  |
|  | **Chief Officer’s report**   * It was agreed to continue the Rough Sleeper Intervention Project for another quarter. * HCAS - SB is on the working group to improve the consortium. * Funding - confirmation of WBC funding is awaited, and is expected to continue on the same level as the last 6 years. * HWAS funding (£20,000 - £25,000) is expected to continue for one more year but is insecure for 2020/21. * The report to the council is an opportunity for us to showcase our work and as such is an important document. This report will be shared with the board in future. |  |
|  | **Service Manager’s report**  CM is on leave so report has not been updated. Two staff members left, Daniel Eyre (debt adviser) and Neelam Hasmukh (housing adviser). Three volunteers have been recruited to these roles. We are establishing a pool of volunteers we can recruit from because it is difficult to match the required skills with external applicants. DE was a DRO intermediary, and while it’s good to have this capacity in-house (it generates good outcomes) it requires a year of training. We will offer it in the future but can refer clients to CitA until then. There is no detriment to the client as we can do all the preparation and CitA can do the online application. We would struggle to maintain this role with reduced funding (a comparable salary is £32,000 offered by HCC at the Money Advice unit).  CM will circulate dates of worker’s meetings and members of the Board are invited to attend. | CM |
|  | **Research and Campaigns update**  The main issues are UC, ESA and PIP. CM has set up a group of volunteers to work on R&C, TB input would be valuable. Noted. | CM |
|  | **Volunteer representative’s report**  None |  |
|  | **Paid Staff Representative’s report**  None |  |
|  | **Date of next meeting**  30th April 2019  Part one ended at 7.40pm |  |
|  | **Part 2 HR reports** |  |