



22 September 2023

Dear Members

Full Council - 25 September 2023

I am now able to enclose, for consideration, the following update report which was unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Item No	Item
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13	<u>Reporting back on meetings of outside bodies (Continued) (Pages 3 - 4)</u>
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To receive any reports from the Council's representatives who serve on outside bodies in respect of meetings they have attended.

Yours sincerely

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Agenda Item 13

Outside Bodies – Reports from Councillors (Continued)

The following updates have been received from Councillors in relation to the outside bodies to which they have been appointed by Full Council, since the last meeting.

	Outside Body	Councillor	Update
7	Lewes Citizens Advice (CAB)	Imogen Makepeace	<p><u>Date of meeting:</u> 20 September 2023 (meeting of CAB with LDC)</p> <p><u>Business discussed:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt enforcement providers are being reviewed. The Council employs two companies in Lewes District. CAB say that the action of the Debt Enforcement Agencies impact greatly on the mental health of their clients. • Suggestion that the Enforcement Officers attend the relationship meetings at quarterly intervals was welcomed. • Communication between LDC and CAB was discussed, this has been a topic in the past and needs some tweaking to be improved. A third party contact email line had not worked, but a direct approach to the officer was encouraged. • CAB continue to observe that digitisation of services raises problems for their clients. In a Cost of Living Crisis access to smartphones and paying for data is not seen as priority, therefore when issues arise or circumstances change it is very difficult for people to manage the situation which inevitably gets worse. • Face to Face facilities are essential for clients to be able to speak to officers. Hopes that accommodation will be found in Cliffe Precinct are on ice as there are still building works outstanding. These observations relate as much to LDC officers as to CAB. The suggestion that a “surgery” type of provision could be found was welcomed, and premises need to be allocated. A scheme to share space with the Housing and Homelessness

	Outside Body	Councillor	Update
			<p>Team offices in Newhaven is to be piloted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LDC officers reminded us that the migration of software from the existing programme to a new one is due to begin on 17 October. This will freeze all accounts until 4 December. New applications and changes of circumstances will be completed manually during this time, housing benefits will be paid manually. Extra staff will be available at this time. There will inevitably be some backlog of work when the new system opens on 4 December. <p>The new system will allow more interactions to be managed online, thus hopefully freeing up more time for people without access to online services to receive telephone support.</p>