

Report Title:	Citizens Advice - Update
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Lead Member:	Councillor Carroll, Lead Member for Adult Social Care, Health, Mental Health and Children's Services
Meeting and Date:	Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 8 March 2021
Responsible Officer(s):	Hilary Hall – Director Adults, Health and Commissioning
Wards affected:	All

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides Members with an outline of a presentation that will be made by the interim CEO of Citizens Advice which will cover how the organisation has adapted during COVID, the merger with Citizens Advice Bracknell & District, how demand for services has changed both in nature and volume, and future plans.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel notes the report and asks questions thereon:

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 1: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Note the presentation and comment thereon. This is the recommended option	None

2.1 This report recommends noting the content of the presentation and seeks members' views and questions arising from it. The presentation will also provide members with the opportunity to speak directly to the Citizens Advice Bureau about current service delivery and future plans.

2.2 The presentation will cover how the organisation has adapted during COVID, the merger with Citizens Advice Bracknell & District, how demand for services has changed both in nature and volume, and future plans.

Citizens Advice

2.3 Citizens Advice helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice. It has been providing these

services in the borough since 1939 and is widely known and recognised as a trusted provider.

- 2.4 In a typical year, Citizens Advice will handle nearly 11,000 issues and see around 4,500 clients. They will support those clients either to gain income, enable debt to be written off or advocate for them at benefit tribunals. Pre Covid, advice was offered through a blend of face to face visits and telephone support; however, throughout the pandemic, the service has switched to remote working and using digital solutions. Not a day of service has been lost throughout the pandemic despite a general increase in demand for the service.
- 2.5 Examples of the issues Citizens Advice provide advice around include:
- Debt and financial issues.
 - Benefits applications and appeals.
 - Employment matters including being furloughed.
 - Housing and the risk of homelessness.
 - Practical help around relationship breakdown.
 - Challenging discrimination.
 - Consumer rights.
- 2.6 Last year, Citizens Advice Bracknell & District and Citizens Advice Maidenhead & Windsor agreed to merge and become Citizens Advice East Berkshire, effective from 1 April 2021. Both charities have a long and successful local history; with over 140 years' experience between them. Pooling resources and expertise will create a larger, more resilient organisation and clients will continue to be served by staff and volunteers directly in their local community.

3. KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The key implications are set out in table 2

Table 2: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Increased understanding of the work of Citizens Advice Bureau	N/A	Presentation provided	N/A	N/A	8 March 2021

4. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

- 4.1 There are no financial implications through this presentation of information.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising through this presentation of information.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 There are no risks associated with this presentation of information.

7. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1 Equalities. No impacts arising through the presentation of information.

7.2 Climate change/sustainability. No impacts arising through the presentation of information.

7.3 Data Protection/GDPR. No impacts arising through the presentation of information.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Not applicable.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 Not applicable.

10. APPENDICES

10.1 None.

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 None.

12. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Cllr Carroll	Lead Member for Adult Social Care, Health, Mental Health and Children's Services	19/2/21	26/2/21
Duncan Sharkey	Managing Director	19/2/21	22/2/21
Adele Taylor	Director of Resources/S151 Officer	19/2/21	19/2/21
Andrew Durrant	Director of Place	-	-
Kevin McDaniel	Director of Children's Services	19/2/21	19/2/21
Elaine Browne	Head of Law	19/2/21	19/2/21
Emma Duncan	Deputy Director of Law and Strategy / Monitoring Officer	19/2/21	19/2/21
Nikki Craig	Head of HR Corporate Projects and IT	19/2/21	19/2/21
Louisa Dean	Communications	19/2/21	
Karen Shepherd	Head of Governance	19/2/21	19/2/21

Bill Feeney	Interim CEO, Citizens Advice Maidenhead and Windsor	19/2/21	22/2/21
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
For information	No	No

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