

19(a) HOSPITAL FUND AND JOHNSTON BEQUEST (AN23-2015)

Reference is made to Article VII of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 14th January, 2013, wherein it was agreed to allocate £25,000 from the Hospital Fund and Johnston Bequest to pilot a targeted welfare benefit advice service for older people in the city.

The previous practice had been to award pensioners a lifetime pension of £80 per annum, generating a total of £14,880 income into the pensioner community. By creating a welfare benefits adviser post at a cost of £25,000 per annum, £200,000 to £250,000 additional income in terms of additional benefits and tax credits etc could be generated and injected into the pensioner community.

Reference is also made to Article VII of the minute of meeting this Committee of 8th September, 2014 when the Committee agreed to extend the period of the pilot through to 31st March, 2015 at a cost of £12,500 which would be met from available funds in the Hospital Fund and Johnston Bequest, it being noted that a review of the outcomes would be carried out near the end of the extended pilot and a recommendation would be brought to the Committee on whether it should be continued on a long-term basis after that review.

The Older People's Advice Service is currently delivered by Citizens Advice, Dundee who were awarded the funding in competition with others in the advice sector in the city and aimed not just to provide money, benefit and debt advice, but also to connect clients to other age related services. Around 67% of the issues raised were about benefits, 16% concerned debts, 2% related to tax, and 9% were to do with Health and Community Care issues.

Income generated for clients for the period September, 2013 to December, 2014 amounts to £285,939.

Given the success of the pilot it is proposed that the Older People's Advice Service is continued for a further financial year from 1st April, 2015 at a cost of £25,000. Lifetime payments to individual pensioners will continue at the current level of £80 per annum. (The estimated cost in 2014/2015 is £10,640).