

Louise Goldsmith
Leader of the Council

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Councillor Tony Dignum
Leader, Chichester District Council
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3rd December 2015

Our Ref: LG/ces

Dear Tony

Infrastructure Support to the Voluntary Sector

Thank you for your letter regarding infrastructure support for the Voluntary sector in Chichester and Arun. I can confirm that the County Council also values the service provided by VAAC and we are pleased with how this arrangement has worked over recent years.

I can also confirm that we are committed to continuing with the contractual arrangements with Districts and Boroughs for the provision of infrastructure support and my officers met only this week with the CVS Network which has Countywide representation from the other voluntary action organisations. These meetings are bi-monthly with their representation rotating on a four monthly basis - I believe Hilary has attended in the past. These arrangements were recently reviewed and representation now includes officers from the District and Borough Councils, and in fact Chichester District were represented at the recent meeting which was helpful. An agreement was made that our officers would engage with the other District and Borough Councils in order that representation complements that of the CVS areas, thereby improving communications between all of the parties.

I know that there have also been regular meetings between West Sussex County Council and the Districts and Borough officers at an operational level the last one of these taking place quite recently on November the 4th and you are correct to say that no definite figures could be communicated. I do understand the difficulty that this is causing. Unfortunately, alongside other authorities with the responsibility for Public Health, we have had, at very short notice, an in year savings target allocated to us of just over £2 million from the Public Health grant and no indication so far of the likely savings required next year. This has resulted in a review of all of our Public Health budgets and contracts which I do understand has caused uncertainty and is unsettling for everyone.

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The general message that you have had is correct. We do wish to continue to devolve this budget to the Districts and Boroughs to enable our staff and the voluntary sector to work together for the benefit of all of our residents. I am committed to communicating the results of our work on this budget as soon as possible and I and my officers understand fully the pressures around the timescales. We would hope to avoid the scenario that you have outlined in your letter.

I hope that this is helpful Tony and I am sorry that I cannot be more definite about future funding but I can assure you that we are working hard to resolve the situation and will be in touch soonest.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Louise Goldsmith', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Louise Goldsmith
Leader
West Sussex County Council