

AGENDA ITEM 5 - ADMINISTRATION'S RESPONSE TO THE OFF THE RECORD PETITION

The Council welcomes the opportunity to discuss Off The Record as we have at recent council meetings.

The City Council is committed to a vibrant voluntary and third sector. By building social capital in communities across the city, we hope to improve outcomes for vulnerable people and to reduce demand for expensive statutory services. The council is pleased to note the relocation from Havant to Portsmouth of the children's charity 'Beat The Bullies' and 'Friend Finders'. Both provide support for children and young people to assist them with tackling some of the most complex issues that arise especially in schools.

The City Council notes that the provision of mental health services rests with the NHS and that Portsmouth CCG has received £406,773 per annum for children's and young people's mental health services as part of the Future in Mind programme. This includes counselling services, which will be supplied by Relate. The council notes that the most recent contract to be lost by Off The Record, was in fact not a council contract but a CCG contract. The City Council has not funded Off The Record since the budget set by the previous administration in February 2014; a bid for transition funding was rejected in March 2014. A number of meetings with councillors and council staff have taken place within the last few months, but to date no viable business plan has been submitted.

As part of the austerity programme, the City Council has had to make savings equivalent to 47% of its revenue budget. Even so it has been able to establish a fund to provide support to the voluntary sector. By using this fund and its other resources, the council has been able to ensure the continuation of the Recovery Café and Dial-a-Ride and has been able to secure counselling services for adults. Whilst the council has relaxed the criteria for use of the VSTF, it is imperative that a charity or not for profit is sustainable beyond the one year council funding. The Council is pleased to note an example of a recent reward and success from this fund is the fact that the good work of Portsmouth Counselling Service will continue under a new agreement with the YOU Trust.

The City Council welcomes bids to the voluntary sector transformation fund and will continue to provide support where the criteria agreed by Full Council are met.

Proposed by (Name) Donna Jones

Signed _____

Seconded by (Name) Simon Boshell

Signed _____