

	Full Council
Date	13 July 2026
Agenda Item	14

To consider a request from the Citizens Advice Bureau

Two or three years ago, the Clerk responded to a request from the United Reformed Church to help them to find tenants for the many vacant rooms they had. At that time there was no CAB in Halstead, the nearest being in Witham. After some negotiation, it was agreed that the CAB would come to the URC once a month to provide a drop-in session for Halstead residents. This has been well used, particularly as the Toastie Tuesdays session offering free food and conversation has been on the same days at the URC. Unfortunately, the Toastie Tuesday sessions are no longer operating, and the only other people in the building are the Banking Hub staff. The CAB find the environment less suitable than it was before. There is a concern over lone working, and also for those coming for advice, they find themselves in a largely empty and not very welcoming environment.

For these reasons, the newly appointed manager for Braintree and South Essex, Liz Clark, came to discuss the situation with the Clerk. She is looking for a more appropriate place to hold the advice sessions, and enable a relaunch of the CAB in Halstead.

For information, the CAB in Braintree operates out of Causeway House, and in Witham out of the Community Hall run by the Town Council.

Liz was shown around the council offices and the hall, and has asked whether it would be possible for the CAB to operate out of the council office for one or possibly 2 days per month, one for drop-in and the other for appointments, using the bookkeeper's office, when Wendy is not in. Liz found the council offices a welcoming space, with a suitable space for waiting, and also providing other services which those coming to the CAB might need.

At present they do not pay a fee/rent to the URC, and it would be reasonable to continue in the same way.

Recommendation: that HTC recognises that offering CAB services to the public out of the council offices would be an enhancement to the services offered, and agrees the proposal.

Sarah Greatorex

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