

Council Meeting – 2 October 2018

Report of Councillor Andrew Sully – Corporate Resources

1. Corporate Services

- 1.1 The key priority across all the service areas remains staff engagement, communications and support as we implement Phase 1 of the restructure and commence Phase 2.

2. Corporate Performance

- 2.1 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) / Data Protection:-
 - The GDPR Compliance Action Plan continues to be implemented. – have now launched The Privacy Impact Assessment process has also now been launched; and
 - The Council will shortly be trialling and launching a shared Data Protection Officer arrangement with South Somerset District Council.
- 2.2 A progress update against the Corporate Governance Action Plan was taken to the Corporate Governance Committee for consideration on 17 September 2018.
- 2.3. We will shortly be collecting the data for the Quarter 2 Performance report.

3. Customer Services

- 3.1 The service continues to take on additional work to provide support to the wider organisation. Over the coming months the team will be dealing with more Council Tax enquiries at the first point of contact and will be undertaking more preparatory work in the Customer Hub in respect of Housing Options customers.
- 3.2 The new Customer Hub in The Deane House is running well and we are continuing to refine the approach.
- 3.3 We are undertaking resource planning to ensure we have adequate cover as staff start to leave or move into new roles resulting from Phase 1 of the Transformation restructure.

4. Facilities Management

- 4.1 The team has continued to support The Deane House accommodation moves, the

latest involving the re-location of those staff who have been working in the John Meikle Room and the other Committee Rooms on the first floor.

- 4.2 The Fire Evacuation and First Aid processes are currently being evaluated to ensure these are kept up to date in support of the accommodation moves and staff changes.
- 4.3 The volumes of post (in and out of The Deane House) are currently being monitored to feed into the design of the new digital mailroom

5. ICT/Technology

- 5.1 The ICT Team continues to support the delivery of critical 'business as usual' projects and support the Transformation Programme Team in delivering key technology projects to support the delivery of Transformation. Current key projects include:-
- Information Management which will involve the implementation of a structured approach to storing data. This will be based on the use of Microsoft Sharepoint and will facilitate improved GDPR compliance and an approach to data storage that will support the new operating model;
 - Infrastructure Security and WIFI upgrades – both projects are progressing well and will be completed in the near future;
 - MOD.GOV – the pilot exercise has been launched with Members. A demonstration of its abilities will be provided as part of the Members' Briefing scheduled to take place on 27 September 2018; and
 - Continuing to provide new equipment to support the accommodation moves.

6. Members Case Management

- 6.1 The function continues to work well and has been running as a trial of a case management approach since February 2018.
- 6.2 We are currently reviewing the process with a view to identifying what has been learnt so this can be fed into the future design of services.

7. Finance

- 7.1 A draft annual Medium Term Financial Plan and Financial Strategy has been presented to the Strategic Forum. This sets the scene for the first budget of the new Council in 2019/2020.
- 7.2 The initial starting point for the 2019/2020 budget will be the combined base budgets of Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils. The Finance Team will be working closely with budget managers in the coming months to review all

existing budgets and any assumptions that have been made. This will also include a review of fees and charges

7.2 Alongside our ongoing financial activities we have continued to support a number of potential capital projects particularly those with a commercial and regeneration aspect including:-

- Firepool Project including a new Hotel;
- Coal Orchard Redevelopment;
- The Collar Factory;
- Somerset Flood Alleviation;
- Taunton Station Regeneration; and
- The Deane House Accommodation Project.

7.3 This work includes producing new and updating existing business cases for these capital projects to determine that they are affordable and meet investment criteria. The Finance Team have also been heavily involved in the current Leisure Contract procurement exercise.

7.4 The Finance Team has continued to support the business transformation process and the preparation and delivery of financial processes for a new single Council.

8. HR and Organisational Development

8.1 The statutory return and reports for gender pay, trade union facilities time and the apprenticeship levy has recently been completed.

8.2 As part of its support to the Transformation process work continues on the preparation of new employment contracts and payroll structural changes.

8.3 Work has also taken place to manage the redundancy process and support staff through the leavers procedure.

8.4 It is pleasing to report that six new apprentices for Building Services have recently been recruited.

9. Revenues and Benefits

9.1 In Revenues, the following tasks have been at the forefront of activities:-

- Focussing on processing post that prevents avoidable contact (e.g. change of address requests);
- Ongoing work with our counter fraud partners (Powys Council) to progress single occupier discount and other potential fraud areas;
- Working with Customer Services to cross skill Customer Service Advisors in Council Tax in preparation for their taking work off of Revenues;
- Continuing to implement the recovery timetable (Quarter 1 collection was on target); and
- Aligning policies in preparation for the single new Council.

9.2 In Benefits the main tasks have been:-

- Consultation for the proposed New Council Tax Support Scheme has come to an end – collating information for recommendation to Members;
- Following the assessment of the results of the Council Tax Support consultation, preparing the new Policy for 2019/2020;
- Preparing the new Discretionary Payments Scheme Policy;
- Signing up for additional new burdens to review all self-employed cases;
- Continuing to support vulnerable customers claiming Universal Credit with Assisted Digital Support and Personal Budgeting Support; and
- The successful integration of the new Customer Hub working closely with Customer Service staff.

Councillor Andy Sully