

# Full Council Meeting – 5 October 2021

## Report of Councillor Ross Henley – Corporate Resources

### Business Grants

- All the mandatory grant schemes have now closed.
- Providing post payment data to various Govt. departments.
- SWAP undertaking post payment assurance work.

### Benefits

- Processing up to date.
- Ongoing administration of the Test & Trace payments scheme – additional funding provided by Govt. The scheme will now continue until 31 March 2022.
- Preparing for the benefits database integration exercise in October 2021.

### Business Intelligence, Performance & Programme Management Office

- Ongoing performance management & monitoring including preparation for the quarter 2 performance report.
- Additional resource recruited to add capacity to progress key programmes e.g. the data analysis for the Customer Experience Programme.
- Ongoing support for the business grants reconciliation, data provision & post payment assurance work

### Customer Services & Deane Helpline

- Experiencing ongoing high volumes of telephone calls. Additional resourcing added to the team to ensure we can maintain our call answering targets.
- Gearing up for the launch of recycle more – additional temporary resourcing and training.
- Taunton & Williton hubs re-opened from July.
- Deane Helpline continues to function as normal.

### Income

- Day-to-day processing (i.e. direct debits for Council Tax, Business Rates, Rents & Miscellaneous income, the transmission of BACS payments, the issue of invoices, the administration of 'right to buy') continues as normal.
- Work has commenced on the detailed planning to implement the enforcement arrears project.

### Operational Support

- Day-to-day work and processing continues as normal and the team are continuing to provide support across the organisation for procuring goods and services, the digital mailroom, paying suppliers, ad hoc support as required. We are continuing to exceed our target for supplier payments and are currently paying 97% within payment terms.

### Revenues

- Good progress is being made in tackling the post year-end processing backlog.

- The full recovery processes were switched back on & have been running smoothly since April. We are closely monitoring collections rates.
- Preparing for the revenues database integration exercise in October 2021.

### **Strategy**

- Working with the directors to develop the directorate plans for next year.
- Ongoing programme management for the Customer Experience Programme.
- Ongoing progress with implementing the Council's Equalities Framework.

### **Finance and Procurement**

The Finance service is continuing to work through and support the external audit of the 202/21 annual accounts. Continuing the trend of previous years, the extent of work required to complete the annual audit is significant. The team, and colleagues in other services, are working hard to ensure the audit is completed on time.

Members of the Audit and Governance Committee can attend a briefing to overview the annual accounts at 5pm on Monday 27 September 2021, just prior to the formal committee that evening where the audited accounts are presented for approval.

Detailed work is also continuing between the finance team and budget holders to review and update detailed budget estimates. An update on progress with the preparation for 2022/23 budget setting will be coming for to members via Scrutiny and Executive committees in October and November.

The procurement team are extremely busy supporting a significant purchasing and contracting activity this year, which is increased with some of the delays from last year's programme that were deferred as priorities were adapted to respond to the pandemic.