

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 18 February 2015

Councillor Jackie Branson: Cabinet Lead for Governance and Logistics

Legal Services

The Legal team are working towards becoming a wholly owned company as from 1st April 2016. The team is to be restructured to reflect a more commercial offering able to compete in the open market. New business is coming in from the Town and Parish Councils and a Marketing Strategy is being written.

Democratic Services and Councillor Support

As part of the ongoing Councillor training programme, three whole-day seminars have now been held covering a wide range of topics. The seminar day planned for March has now been deferred until after the elections and, in the meantime, the team is consulting with Councillors on the format and content of seminar days. Feedback from members is very important in helping to ensure that future training and information sessions are as effective as possible and the best use of time and resources.

Work is now underway to put together a comprehensive induction programme for new Councillors, to be held on 29 May. An itinerary for the day will be made available to all Councillors, who will be welcome to attend if they wish.

Recommendations by the Governance and Logistics Scrutiny and Policy Development Panel in relation to the annual round of appointments to outside bodies were agreed by the Cabinet on 4 February. This included a general guidance code for Councillors and, building on that piece of work, I am now working with officers to draw up terms of reference for individual outside appointments, so that Councillor representatives can be clear as to their roles and objectives.

The new electronic system for processing meeting documentation is now fully implemented and, following a successful training session held in December, Councillors are now using the system to review reports and minutes as well as access the calendar of meetings, agendas and other documentation. User guides are available and the Democratic Services Team is always happy to help and advise Councillors on how to make the best use of the system to suit their needs

Elections

There are UK Parliamentary and part Local elections on 7 May 2015? There are local elections in all but the four Leigh Park wards, Battins, Barncroft, Bondfields and Warren Park. Cowplain, Hart Plain and Waterloo wards are in the Meon Valley Constituency but we are running the Parliamentary elections in those wards on Meon Valley's behalf. This fact will however delay the local counts for those three wards as the ballot boxes all have to be sent to Winchester for verification and won't be returned until Friday morning. The other counts will take place after the close of polls on Thursday evening, as usual.

Audit and Governance

Our internal auditors have drafted their annual audit plan and discussed it with the Executive Board ready for Governance & Audit Committee's approval on 3 March. The external auditors are working closely with our finance team on some pre-work to the annual accounts audit to ensure the process runs

Revenue and Benefits

The national roll-out of Universal Credit is now underway. The roll-out will be split into 4 tranches commencing from February 2015. Councils involved in tranches 1 and 2 have been formally notified. In Hampshire, Southampton are in tranche 1 (March 2015) and Eastleigh in tranche 2 (May 2015).

Currently the indication is that Havant Borough will be in tranche 4 probably around March 2016 although the exact date will not be confirmed until later this year.

At this stage the national roll-out is limited to new claims from single claimants who would previously have claimed Jobseekers Allowance.

Facilities Management

The facilities team are in the process of recruiting to the vacant facilities officer post and it is hoped that we will have made an appointment to that post by the middle of March.

Room hire and income at the Plaza for this year is slightly up on last year. From the period of 1st April 2014 to 31st January 2015 we have received around £44,000 which I am sure all will be pleased to note. All this income is revenue growth to the Council. Not only is this income being generated from the Conference Centre we are now renting out some of the smaller interview rooms in the Plaza on the ground floor in the Atrium to smaller companies and meetings.

HR, Learning and Development

An equivalent rate to the living wage has now been implemented for staff at HBC. This follows the decision made at Full Council on 10 December 2014

Workforce, succession planning and talent management activities have been the key focus to enable the Council to identify business critical posts and suitable succession plans to fulfil these posts should they become vacant. In addition this exercise has been helpful to identify the top talent in the Council and consider what development opportunities are available to retain and motivate staff. Further work will continue on this area over the coming months.

Middle managers have now been invited to attend a leadership development programme called 'Evolve'. This is a real positive for middle managers to engage in a two year development programme which focuses on the leadership skills needed to create organisational change.

The launch of the electronic e-leave system marks the start of introducing electronic manager and employee self service systems. This will create efficiencies for the Council and streamline paper based processes and procedures.

The employee recognition scheme 'You're a Star' has now launched. This scheme is a fantastic way to recognise our staff who go above and beyond in their roles. A number of staff were nominated for the significant contribution they had made to the Council.

In addition to this, work has now commenced on a Member Development Strategy. This strategy clearly identifies the training and development opportunities available to Councillors at the start and during their political career with the Council. This is on track to roll out during Q1 15/16.

Jackie Branson