

Portfolio Holder Report – Council 17 April 2013

By Cllr Michael Cheshire – Marketing & Development

Marketing & the Customer

Digital Environment

The Havant Borough Council website is receiving favourable comments from users with the general consensus that our customers feel that the new website is easier to use and more intuitive than the old one. We have started to work with each service to improve their end to end service on the web to bring in more e commerce and to improve workflows internally.

The Plaza's Suites

Councillors will be pleased to know that we have been extremely successful in the marketing of our Suites. The final income generated for the first year of trading was £16,014. This is nearly double the amount first articulated in the Plaza's Business Case, and the FM and Marketing teams should be congratulated.

The History of Havant

We felt that the Havant History booklets that were previously all available to view on the old Havant Borough Council website were located in the wrong digital site. As a result of negotiations with the authors the booklets from the Local History Group, penned by Cllr Cousins and other local history authors, will be placed on at least two local websites which already hold the 'History of Havant' and the 'Havant Heritage' in their content and menus. Havant.gov.uk will link to these sites to ensure we will continue to support access to local history information.

An exciting opportunity may arise in the near future for the Local History Group to have its own website which would be a first for Havant as the Borough does not currently have a History Website.

Customer Services

Customer Services have continued to maintain excellent service levels. We are aiming to collect more data at our face to face service points to be able to further improve our channel shift work – making sure customers who require face to face services still receive them but moving customers who do not want or need to come in onto the new website.

Customer Access

The management of the Beachlands visitor information point is to be transferred to the Marketing & Development cluster and will be referred to as a customer access point. We will focus on helping our customers in the south of our Borough to reach the face to face council services that they need at Beachlands, Hayling Island.

LGC Awards

With the support of the communications team, the Public Service Plaza was shortlisted for the LGC 'Public Sector Partnership' Award. Being placed in the top nine entrants for this category is a sound recognition for the Council.

Human Resources

Councillor Development

Trialling of the councillor e-learning portal has continued and is in the process of being agreed for implementation in the early part of 13/14. The demonstration for Councillors on this e-learning tool was due to be held on 8th April, 2013, however as attendance rates for this session were low due to other pressing organisational priorities, this will be re-arranged. All Councillors will receive a further invitation and are encouraged to attend.

A review of training needs for Councillors has taken place with Councillor Cheshire and Councillor Phillips in conjunction with Human Resources and Democratic Services. This information will now be used to put in place a development programme for Councillors which will be implemented during May 2013.

The Councillor Conference has been postponed. A further date will be set in the future and all Councillors will be sent details in due course.

Human Resources (HR) Strategy & Transaction

Work continues on the implementation of activities contained within the People Plan. Key achievements delivered during Quarter 4 12/13 include the delivery of training sessions to help staff deal more effectively with change; review of the occupational health service; development of an alcohol and substance abuse procedure and the development of a revised pay policy statement.

A significant amount of HR advice and support continues to be provided to the change programme to enable Service Managers to progress with their service reviews. This has included Finance; Housing; Economic Development; Community; Operational Services and Planning Policy.

Work has been underway to develop HR Service Level Agreements for HR administration processes. This will ensure that internal customers across the Council are fully aware of the HR service they can expect to receive.

Staff Learning & Development

Mandatory courses have been rolled out for all staff to complete through the e-learning system. Data Protection and Display Screen Equipment courses have been completed during December and February respectively. Equality & Diversity and Customer Care is scheduled for April.

Managers/Team Leaders and Supervisors have been attending absence management workshops. These have been delivered in-house by the HR team to raise management awareness of how to effectively deal with absence issues. These workshops have been well received.

Business Improvement

Electronic Diaries

There have been some queries regarding the timings of meetings in electronic diaries, and the actual start time, which has caused some confusion. The team have now identified a fix for this, which will be implemented week commencing 29th April. Meanwhile, the democratic services team are finalising preparations to introduce a new democratic service IT system which will simplify the management and communication of meetings.

IT Partnership

The team recently held two IT drop-ins for Councillors at Havant and East Hampshire. This was a good opportunity to pick up on any IT issues, and to assist with using devices such as iPads to access the Council's systems. We have agreed to hold further sessions throughout the year to provide everyone with this continued support.

Corporate Programme Office

The Quarter 3 Performance Health Check has been considered by JEB, the Cabinet, and by the Scrutiny Panel Leads during February and March. This is now available on the Councillors Area on the intranet <http://holli/holli-3005>.

Performance Highlights for Quarter 3:

- **Planning Applications** – there has been further improvement in the figures recorded against the processing of planning applications; all of the performance indicators for the Planning & Built Environment cluster are now on target.
- **Complaints responses** – in the previous Quarter, this indicator had been highlighted as an area to focus improvement; this performance indicator is now exceeding its target for all Havant Borough Council clusters.
- **Housing Benefit overpaid debt** – there has been a significant reduction in the overpaid debt for Housing Benefit. The Overpayment Team has been very proactive in trying to reduce the debt outstanding. This again had been an indicator highlighted for required improvement for this Quarter.

- **Criminal Damage** – the number of reported incidents has continued fall, which contradicts the anticipated upward trend.
- **Council tax collection rate** – the collection figures again show a slight improvement, when compared to those for Quarter 3 last year.

Areas to focus improvement on in Quarter 4 2012/13

The following have been identified as key areas which require improvement, based upon the performance figures for Quarter 3:

- **Recycled waste** – the percentage of contaminated recycled waste has improved slightly, but still doesn't meet the agreed target for 2012/13. A countywide initiative is being discussed at present, to help reduce this figure, by means of a 'partnership compact'.
- **Council Tax arrears** – the arrears **reduction** for Quarter 3 has slowed; the figure is now significantly more than at the same stage last year.
- **Non domestic rates arrears** – there has only been a marginal fall in the arrears figure. However, this currently includes an amount of debt in respect of empty properties, where the owners are overseas.

Safer Havant Partnership

Following the recent fact finding visit by the Police and Crime Commissioner to Havant the Partnership have secured £9,000 in funding to support crime reduction initiatives such as Junior Citizen and targeted work to reduce the impact of crime and antisocial behaviour in the Borough of Havant.

The Partnership has identified domestic abuse as a key area for work during the next year and is joined with Southern Domestic Abuse Service and Police in conducting research into gaps in service delivery relating initial reporting and the availability of support for victims.

Key areas of work currently being undertaken are in relation to crime and antisocial behaviour in the Greywell area of Leigh Park and drug and substance related crime and anti social behaviour in the vicinity of Hayling Seafront.