

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 9 December 2015

Councillor Michael Wilson: Cabinet Lead for Governance, Logistics and HR

Legal Services

The Legal Services business case was initially brought before Cabinet to consider the implications for setting up a wholly owned Local Authority company to deliver legal services in the first instance. Cabinet agreed, in principle, to support the business case to allow further work to be undertaken to assess the feasibility of providing legal services to external clients.

The expectation was that legal services would be offered to other public sector clients, quasi public sector bodies such as further education colleges, and small and medium sized businesses. The possibility to incorporate other back office services was also considered. Cabinet agreed to invest £125,000 based on anticipated expenditure and projected revenue which would lead to the entire sum being repaid to the Council in less than 4 years.

After considering the 2014 (and older) marketing and benchmarking data it is clear that whilst the market is growing for the top 200 companies, the remaining 98% (where Luminas would enter the market) face a hostile environment, with strong competition.

The average billable hourly rate of £135 was originally proposed for Luminas for trading with both public and private sector clients. A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken, using 2014 data. There is a range of hourly rates across various local authorities. The research demonstrates that this rate is not competitive in the public sector market.

Work will continue on recruitment, process mapping and the further implementation of the case management system in order to serve its existing clients and build resilience for the future.

On this basis, there is no justification to continue to fund the project and the decision has been taken to close the Legal Team Project.

The Legal Team will continue to build on their in-house work by undertaking additional work for external clients where possible, within the existing structure.

Democratic Services

The Democratic Services team are finalising the training and development plan for members, ready for delivery in the New Year. Shortly, members will be provided with a member development needs analysis form to complete which will allow them to illustrate their personal training needs. Members are

encouraged to complete these forms and send back to democratic services in order to allow the team to provide a more directive approach to training, by targeting the areas with highest demand. This will allow for a broader range of skills and knowledge across all Councillors, making for a more robust and able Council.

Included in the development programme will be online training courses. These will allow for a more innovative approach to training, allowing Councillors to complete courses in their own time, at their own pace while either at home, at work or on the move. One of the online courses is currently being tested, with further courses hoping to be delivered soon in the New Year.

Elections

In Electoral Services we are now coming to the end of the annual canvass and are working very hard to ensure that as many people as possible are registered to vote. After the set process of delivering Household Enquiry forms to every household, followed by 2 reminders and a door knock, we sent 6800 final letters all of which have resulted in a return rate today of 93.39%. This is about 3% lower than usual but we are still receiving forms back. Having now contacted all known new electors with Individual Registration forms we are working on the 3500 non responding 'pending' electors. This will be an on-going exercise but the new Register of Electors will be published on 1st December. The work on preparing for the Local Elections and the Police and Crime Commissioner Election on May 5 2016 has also begun.

Revenue and Benefits

Universal Credit

The national roll-out of Universal Credit is continuing. The roll-out has been split into 4 tranches and Havant Borough will be in tranche 4 commencing in March 2016 although the exact date will not be confirmed until nearer the time.

Currently the national roll-out is limited to new claims from single claimants who would previously have claimed Jobseekers Allowance so the number of cases is expected to be low. Initial estimates from Job Centre Plus indicate that there may be around 1200 new claims in Havant Borough in the period up to 31 March 2017.

The rest of the national roll-out is dependent on the new digital IT system which is currently being tested at a handful of Job Centres. The Department for Work & Pensions is currently telling Councils that the next phase will be a natural migration for new claims for Housing Benefit and the other legacy benefits with the number of claims for these benefits progressively declining as they are replaced by Universal Credit claims. This phase is due to commence during 2017.

The final phase will be the managed migration of existing Housing Benefit and other legacy benefit claims and this is now scheduled to start in 2018 with the aim of completing most of the transition to Universal Credit by 2020-2021.

Facilities Management (including the Cafe)

On Sunday 8th November, many Borough Councillors, joined the Mayor, Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire and our Havant MP to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of our country and to ensure that those who have served (and fallen) in the protection of our country and its values are not forgotten and, of course, also remembering those that continue to serve and protect us throughout the world.

Many uniformed organisations, veterans, voluntary groups and individuals took part in the Parade (that was lead by T S Explorer NTC) - as well as a large contingent from 16 Regiment RA. The general public came out in force to pay their respects with over 1,000 people congregating at the War Memorial.

Officers from the Borough Council work hard in the months leading up to Remembrance and on the day, in conjunction with the Royal British Legion (Havant Branch) and the Police, to ensure this important event is co-ordinated, well organised, dignified and a fitting tribute to those who have lost their lives fighting for their country. This involves ensuring that the Parade route is safe and that the war memorial and surrounding area are clean and in as pristine condition as possible for the Act of Remembrance

HR, Learning and Development

The culture change programme of work remains on schedule. Workshops have been held with a variety of staff to identify the aspects of current culture which will enable or block future delivery of the corporate strategy. These workshops have proved to be helpful in identifying the types of HR/OD interventions needs for 16/17 and beyond. An overall OD plan is in the process of being developed and will be finalised January 2016.

Work continues on Phase 2 Terms and Conditions (T&C) project. The specialist reward consultant has been hired and commenced work late September. A T&C survey has been developed in conjunction with the T&C Champions and this has been distributed to staff. This survey provides staff with the opportunity to provide views on their current package and views on what a new package could look like. This information has been provided to the reward specialist to factor into the development of the new package. Financial data has been modelled on the value of the current package which has also been provided to the reward consultant.

A proposal on 'commercial thinking' has been developed to ensure that staff are equipped with the skills to think more commercially and make effective decisions. A four day programme will commence from January 2016 for Service Managers and above. A lighter touch programme will be available for middle managers and support roles within a similar timescale. It is anticipated this programme will roll into 16/17.

The pilot programme for a 360 degree feedback approach has been progressing well. Participants of the pilot scheme will shortly receive feedback on their leadership performance. A review of the pilot scheme will take place during Q4 15/16 before this scheme is rolled out to the wider leadership levels of the organisation in line with the new appraisal year for 16/17.

Another successful leadership conference has been held for staff this year. The conference focused on leadership and team work and utilised the experiences of a master speaker who had participated as a skipper in the world's toughest yacht race, the BT Global Challenge. It highlighted a number of key leadership lessons on culture, teamwork, leadership styles and communication. Attendees were challenged throughout the conference to focus on their leadership approach and how they could improve their leadership performance.

An interactive Councillor Development Brochure will be available early in the New Year on modern gov. This has been developed by the HR team in conjunction with marketing colleagues to enable Councillors to access all information related to development/training in one place. This will include the recently approved Councillor Development Strategy and Councillor Competency Framework documents.

The Council has recently participated in an OD study for shared Councils conducted by the Institute of Employment Studies (facilitated through the LGA). The aim of this study was to share case studies so OD best practice can be identified and learning can be taken from this. Initial results of the study so far would indicate that the Council has progressed well in OD terms when compared to other Councils – particularly the implementation of an integrated HR/OD strategy. The final report for this research will be available shortly.