

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 1 November 2017

Councillor Lulu Bowerman: Cabinet Lead for Governance and Organisational Development.

Legal Services

Abe Ezekiel, Head of Legal, is currently on a phased return following major surgery, so Marie Rosenthal will remain with the Team two days a week until Abe is back to full strength.

Following my last report, the decision has been taken to condense the three workstreams into two, and the team are now organised into two specialist teams as follows:

- Governance, Litigation & Planning Team led by Nick Leach (Monitoring Officer)
- Company, Commercial & Property Team led by Sara Bryan (Deputy Monitoring Officer)

This decision will be kept under review.

Annabel Foskett who joined as Legal Assistant will be undertaking her Legal Practice Course in order to qualify as a solicitor, and we offer her all the very best in her endeavours. Razana Begum, has recently completed a Diploma in Local Government Law, so many congratulations to her.

Finally Clare O'Meara joined the legal team and is working in the Company, Commercial and Property team 3 days a week, reporting to Sara Bryan.

Organisational Development

The following activities are currently being undertaken as part of the Council's Organisational Development plan, and annual business plan objectives;

Fit for Future

This project is designed to ensure all retained line managers and members of staff, post transfer of services to third party providers, are able to operate successfully within a self service and outsourced HR model. Key activities undertaken to date include a dedicated Communications Plan, events for line managers and staff members to raise awareness of the impact of service delivery changes on their roles, and roll out of training by Capita in respect of the online systems to be used as part of their service delivery model. Planned future activities include;

- A post 'go live' staff survey to assess the effectiveness of the Fit for Future communications plan, to establish good practice activities when communicating large scale changes;

- Receiving feedback from line managers and staff members in respect of Capita systems training, to ensure learning needs have been met and identify any further actions required;
- Design and roll out of a second phase of HR skills training, suitable for junior supervisors

Skills Development:

A Leadership Conference will be held in January 2018. The event will focus on creating the right conditions for high performing organisations. The conference will be opened by the Chief Executive of the LGA and an expert consultant will facilitate a participative session for attendees. The conference is open to all members of staff who have line manager responsibilities and are therefore able to influence the success of the Council, referred to as 'leaders'.

To further support the conditions for high performance, leaders will be invited to attend a series of workshops to explore the importance of mindset when working through organisational change. An external expert facilitator will present these sessions entitled 'Engaging for Excellence'.

The annual Leadership Conference and Engaging for Excellence workshops are both designed to generate concrete action plans for leaders.

An offer of Executive Coaching will be made to Heads of Service. An external provider has been sourced to support Heads of Service.

Individual personal development will be promoted during the coming months, using a drop in event specifically as a vehicle to raise awareness of opportunities such as;

- 360 degree feedback
- In house coaching availability
- Action Learning Sets
- E-learning
- HR Skills training for supervisors

Staff Engagement:

Staff engagement will be critical to the Council delivering its strategic aims. In order to support this, a specific engagement survey will be rolled out in early 2018 to gauge the extent of engagement by staff members. The Staff Focus Group have also recently revised their Terms of Reference to support the Council with robust internal communications and employee engagement.

Health and Wellbeing;

A report is being designed following a recent survey into workplace stress issues, using the HSE Management Indicators. The report will highlight areas of focus for change including priority actions, and also highlight positive

workplace experiences as reported by survey respondents. A number of stakeholders will be key in supporting this project, including UNISON, Culture Change Champions and Health and Safety Champions.

Culture Change:

The Culture Change Champions will be identifying actions that can be taken individually and by teams to remove 'blockers' and maximise 'enablers' to successful working in line with corporate aims. This follows from work undertaken previously to identify key cultural issues which either support or detract from the work of the Councils.

Democratic Services

Councillor Development

The work of the Councillor Development Panel continues, in preparation for the Council's ambition to achieve accreditation for the SEE (South East Employers) Charter for Elected Member Development. The Panel has overseen the collation of written evidence for the accreditation bid, and is preparing for the assessment day on 11 December. For this assessment, an external peer group will visit the Council offices and interview the Panel on the Council's development programme, while also meeting the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive.

In addition to this, a selection of non-Cabinet members will also be interviewed on the training and development sessions available to all Councillors. Communications will be circulated shortly in relation to this.

The Panel recently conducted a Mid-Year Training Review survey, asking all members to indicate any topic areas in need of further development for Councillors, feedback on previous seminars and suggest any improvements to the Councillor Training Programme. The results of this survey were considered at the last Panel meeting and will inform the training programme going forward. Please contact Panel members or Democratic Services if there are any further areas you feel there should be more further training in.

In addition to these areas of work, the Panel recently conducted a review of the Councillor Development Strategy, updating the document for 2017 – 2019 and ensuring this remains fit for purpose. Elements of the Panel's coming work programme include the identification of Councillor mentors and the preparation for the induction programme for members newly elected in the May 2018 elections.

The Panel maintains the on-going monitoring role of the Councillor Training Programme. Recent Councillor training sessions have covered a wide range of topic areas, including dementia awareness, fraud awareness and regular briefings on the Local Plan and CIL Spending.

Looking forward, the following sessions are coming up in the training programme:

- Safeguarding Training – Thursday 2 November, 5pm OR Tuesday 7 November, 1.30pm
- Local Plan Briefing 5 – Monday 6 November, 5pm
- Quarterly Planning Healthcheck – Wednesday 15 November, 5pm
- Emergency Planning Training – Tuesday 28 November, 5pm
- Local Plan Briefing 6 – Monday 4 December, 5pm

Feedback from sessions is highly useful in informing the layout, format and content of future sessions, so members are encouraged to complete feedback forms made available at each training course.

Scrutiny

The Council's scrutiny work is well underway for the current municipal year. Reviews into the Council's beach hut provision and the Assets of Community Value Policy have been completed by their respective Panels and are due to be considered at the Scrutiny Board meeting on 7 November.

The Budget 2018/2019 review has started, with 'early thoughts discussions' undertaken with selected Heads of Service with a focus on those areas that set fees and charges. The briefing notes from these sessions will be considered by the Panel before further in depth interviews are held to discuss budgetary plans for 2018/2019.

Councillors who wish to take part in any of the reviews currently in progress are encouraged to speak to Democratic Services.

Electoral Services

We are busy with the annual canvass currently in order to produce an accurate new Register of Electors on 1 December. We began the process at the start of August and our 38 canvassers are now busy knocking on doors throughout the Borough, trying to retrieve household forms not returned by some 14000 households. Once we have these back we have the onerous task of sending Registration forms to all new people added to the household forms so that they can be individually registered.