

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 21 February 2018

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

Legal Services

Following a period of ill health, Abe Ezekiel, Head of Legal, has now left the organisation and we wish him the very best for the future.

In the interim, Sara Bryan (Lead Solicitor, Company, Commercial & Property) and Nick Leach (Lead Solicitor, Governance, Litigation and Planning) will be managing the Team in their respective workstreams, and they report to Lydia Morrison with any issues that they may have. Thanks to Sara and Nick for taking on this additional responsibility.

The Team have hit the ground running in the New Year, and all of the officers have busy case loads

Finally, Jo Tarrant, one of team who is based at EHDC has had major spinal surgery. She is recovering well, and it is hoped that she will be back on her feet soon.

Democratic Services

Councillor Development

As you may recall from my verbal update at the last Full Council meeting, we were successful in our bid for accreditation for the SEE Charter for Elected Member Development. Following the assessment day on 11 December, the external peer group gave a number of positive comments on the Council's commitment to member development as well as the systems and mechanisms in place for the continuing improvement of member training, such as the Training Needs Analysis and monitoring of course feedback.

Many thanks once again to all those who volunteered and contributed to the assessment day and those who played their part in the Council's successful bid. I am pleased to announce that the certificate will be officially presented at the next Full Council meeting.

The focus now turns to maintaining charter status and embedding Councillor Development as a key priority for the organisation. The Councillor Development Panel is now working to implement a new Councillor Induction Programme for those who will be newly elected in May 2018. The programme aims to provide the essential information and help those newly-elected members to get use to life as an elected representative of their community. To aid this, the Panel has asked for volunteers amongst Councillors for mentors and 'topic champions' who will be able to use their experience and expertise to help the new members in their early days as a Councillor. Many thanks to

those who have already volunteered - if you are interested in becoming a mentor or 'topic champion' please contact Democratic Services.

The Councillor Development Panel will also be investigating new ways of providing training, such as filmed sessions and e-learning courses. Regular monitoring of training sessions and consideration of the Councillor Training Programme will continue. If there are any areas you feel need to be covered within the training programme, please liaise with Democratic Services.

Scrutiny

The Council's scrutiny work continues to progress well. One of the major projects for the year, the Budget 2018/19 Scrutiny has been completed with the Panel's recommendations being accepted in full by both the Scrutiny Board and Cabinet. The process for the review has been widely endorsed by the Scrutiny Board, Cabinet and the Heads of Service who were interviewed. A business case for paperless committee meetings is currently being prepared by the Democratic Services Team and will be submitted to the Budget Scrutiny Panel shortly.

Reviews into grass cutting and weed clearance in the Borough and the Community Trigger are scheduled to be submitted to the Scrutiny Board. Scrutiny Panel is currently scoping a review of the Parking Supplementary Planning Document. In addition to these reviews, Panels have also been receiving updates on previous recommendations given by the Scrutiny Board to Cabinet.

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

Customer Services

Approximately 9,500 Garden Waste Renewal letters were posted to residents in January. The Customer Service Centre in Coventry has been dealing with inquiries and taking payments and there is also an easy to use form and payment system accessed via the online system which I have personally used and found very efficient.

Organisational Development (including Councillor training and development, HR, Learning and Development, Access and Equalities)

Strategic Human Resources and Organisational Development

There are a number of Strategic HR and OD projects in progress to support the strategic aims of the Council:

Leadership Conference

The Leadership Conference for 2018, which took place on 10 January 2018, focused on productivity and performance. The Conference was opened by Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive of the Local Government Association. Drawing on a career in public service, including Chief Executive roles at

Cambridgeshire County Council and Durham County Council, Mark was able to provide unique insights into the work of the LGA. Steve Whiddett, an Occupational Psychologist, introduced a tool to support productivity and overall performance. The productivity tool will be used as a pilot by five service areas, which will result in case studies for the benefit of other service areas.

Employee Engagement

Employee engagement continues to be a priority area of work for the Strategic HR and OD team. In conjunction with the Staff Focus Group, preparations are being made for a staff survey to be rolled out in the coming months. The results of the survey will provide information for the senior leadership team on the level of engagement our staff have with the Council as their employer, how balanced our staff perceive their employment relationship with the Council to be, and any issues with disengagement. This survey will further inform the work of the Strategic HR and OD team.

Learning and Development

HR Skills

Following a successful modular programme for Heads of Service and Team Leaders, a second phase of training will be delivered to other line managers and supervisors. The programme's objective is to ensure that staff with line manager responsibilities are fully aware of, and able to work with policies and procedures relating to the management of staff. The second phase of training delivery will be designed and delivered by an HR Business Partner, reducing costs to the Council.

GDPR

The General Data Protection Regulation will come into force on 25 May 2018. The Regulation widens responsibility for personal data. An HR Business Partner is preparing a training package which will raise awareness of 1) individual responsibility as an employee 2) undertaking work practices to minimise risk of data breaches 3) consequences of data breaches.

Leadership Development

The middle management group i.e. those who report directly into a Head of Service will be supported through change through a modular programme during 2018/19. The programme will focus on leading through change, understanding people's reactions to change and the importance of communication style during times of change in order to ensure staff can deal with and manage change more effectively.

Cllr Development -(See Democratic Services)

Mandatory Learning and Development

The Strategic HR and OD team will continue to work with Council staff members and external providers to ensure appropriate training is provided on an ongoing basis. This will cover corporate matters such as safeguarding, data protection, public disclosures and equality and inclusion. A quarterly induction for new members of staff will continue to be held.

Employee Wellbeing

An HR Business Partner and Health and Safety Advisor are continuing to work towards developing a Wellbeing Strategy. Also In development are a communications campaign regarding bullying and harassment in the workplace, understanding of mental health issues in the workplace and encouraging staff to discuss their mental health, and Safety Champions supporting staff as a 'safe place' to discuss workplace stress.

Electoral Services

Preparations have now started in earnest for this year's elections in May. The new Register of Electors was published on 1 December and electoral services have continued to chase non responding new electors. The annual review of the postal votes also started in January for those people with postal votes that are 5 years old as they will be required to provide new signatures and also for voters whose circumstances have changed to update their details. This finishes on 23 February.

Audit and Governance,

I recently attended an excellent Local Authority Members Governance forum at the external auditors, Ernst and Young in Southampton with Cllr Ken smith, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee. There were some very interesting discussions with chairmen of audit committees from across Hampshire and the IOW about current challenges and risks to local government and the characteristics needed for a good effective audit committee.

Revenue and Benefits.

The Customer Portal was launched in January –and Customers can now log on and see various details about their Council Tax account and set up Direct Debits etc. The Portal will be publicized to residents with the new year Council Tax bills in March.