

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 27 January 2021

Councillor Lulu Bowerman: Cabinet Lead for People and Organisational Development

Staffing

Health and Safety (H&S)

All staff working from home have completed Display Screen Equipment self assessments, to ensure their working arrangements and set up are in line with the regulations. Each form has been reviewed by H&S when required equipment has been provided in the way of an office, chair, desk, footrest etc. Communications have been sent out raising awareness and emphasising the need to report any concerns to H&S teams. The recent roll out of laptops has required DSE forms being updated.

Following a requirement from the Government to ensure all office spaces were Covid secure and in line with Government guidance, a review took place of the office areas and measures were introduced to ensure 2 metre social distancing and hand hygiene measures were complied with. This resulted in the compilation of a generic office risk assessment, signage, a reduction in the desk capacity, enhanced cleaning regime and the production of an office handbook (circulated to all staff). On going monitoring is taking place to make sure those working in the office are kept as safe as they can be after completing a building induction and health form. Due to Lockdown 3, the majority of staff are working from home and only a small number are working in the Plaza.

Training continues to take place with all new starters receiving an initial building induction followed by Basic Health and Safety training ideally within six weeks of commencing employment. These are being carried out virtually and have been well received. During this training awareness of wellbeing is raised and the need for a healthy work life balance.

The Mental Health First Aiders continue to offer support to colleagues. There are clear guidelines as to their role and responsibility as they are not trained counsellors, they sign post colleagues to where they can go for support. They raise awareness with staff with weekly information of where they can obtain support.

The monitoring of Contractors continues, ensuring that compliance is taking place in line with the HSAWA. We have implemented a check list for officers to ensure there are risk assessments, Insurance and where applicable training records in place. These are communicated to staff, and also includes guidance on what to be considered when employing contractors to carry out work. It is also important to raise awareness of our duty of care and that we cannot relinquish our responsibility where H&S is concerned.

The monitoring of all aspects of health and safety continues for our contractor Norse, ensuring documentation is in place and monitoring is being carried out. We also attend the Client and CMT meetings where we can raise any concerns.

Training has taken place with Heads of Service, Line Managers and Safety Champions to raise awareness of the current Incident Reporting procedure and the new system for incidents of violence, aggression, threats and verbal abuse. As part of the process a warning letter has been introduced. This has now been rolled out to all staff and those front line officers will now have access to this information. Currently there are no entries for either Council.

The quarterly Safety Champion committee meeting is due to take place in January 2021. The accident and incident (violence and aggression) reports from the last quarter will be discussed. All minutes are circulated to all staff and are available on Skoop. The Joint Health and Safety Committee meeting is also due to take place in January 2021 with minutes on Skoop.

Officers regular attend countywide meetings relating to Health and Safety and also the South East Employers H&S network.

The Corporate Health and Safety teams workplan is progressing and preparations are underway for 2021 schedule with team meetings take place monthly.

We continue to support colleagues with the Beachlands issues at Hayling which relate to flooding, beach huts and the general environment. We have been involved with beach safety and have been part of the consultation with the RNLI and other partners.

The Councils Out of Hours service at EHDC and HBC, continues to offer support, advice and guidance to member of the public and partners when the offices are closed.

Emergency Planning

Annual training programme will shortly be underway for the Emergency Control Centre staff. New roles and arrangements are being introduced within the (ECC) across Hampshire.

We are continually monitoring the weather situation and pass on information as and when required. Recent storms required support with sand bagging across both Councils and the installation of the flood boards at Hayling, two weeks earlier than usual.

We are reviewing the Adverse Weather Plan in conjunction with several other teams. Primarily relating to snow and the impacts on services, like waste, streets and grounds. Flooding guidance booklets are being reviewed and updated.

During the Covid major incident we continue to attend the Local Resilience Forum Tactical Coordinating Group meetings, HCC Emergency Planning officers meeting and act as a liaison between the Council and the LRF, providing regular updates and information to the Chief Executive and wider teams.

Business Continuity (BCP)

Prior to lock down all services reviewed their BC Plans and we supported teams with this work. Line managers were asked to carry out a desk top exercise and we will continue to repeat this exercise.

Business Continuity awareness training has taken place with the Corporate Management Team. Training is being rolled out to Managers and Team leaders, so they have a better understanding of why we need to have BC Plans, commencing January 2021.

A survey was circulated to Heads of Service to understand how teams used their BC plans during the Covid incident to date, what arrangements were underway in relation to recovery for their service and what preparations were in place for a 'reasonable worst case scenario'. A report went to Executive Board at the beginning of November detailing the findings.

Plans and preparations were in place for Brexit on 31 December. These ensured that services are able to continue if officers are impacted by travel disruption in and around the Portsmouth area. We have been able to establish that very few officers have been affected so far.

Strategic HR and OD

The pay award was implemented successfully to staff in October's pay with no errors reported.

The 'Be the Best you Can Be' programme has been launched to staff incorporating flexible digital learning methods to provide access to a wide range of learning and development resources. This includes upwards of 15 e-learning courses available to staff and councillors. This programme will be developed further for Councillors and launched in the next month or so following a review by the Councillor Development Panel.

Wellbeing initiatives continue to support staff through the pandemic. A wellbeing survey was sent out to staff to complete throughout November to enable the council to ensure the right wellbeing initiatives are in place for the coming months as we are aware of the possible variations in responses due to the change of seasons from lockdown 1 to lockdown 2 and 3 – from summer to winter

Legal and Democratic Services

Legal Services

Daniel Toohey has been appointed as Head of Legal and Democratic Services and subject to council approval, Monitoring Officer.

A recruitment drive is underway, to appoint four solicitors across a number of practice areas. This is intended to further strengthen and underpin service delivery whilst also broadening and enhancing the professional expertise available within the Department

As part of service improvements, Legal Services are currently upgrading its IKEN case management software. A project involving Capita and the council to upgrade the Legal case management system (Iken) is continuing at pace and is projected to complete by mid March. Our legal team will then have the ability to reliably maintain digitalised files of legal papers in one location, run management reports to help manage performance of the service and will enable the legal team to work remotely.

Covid-19 Business continuity plans remain in place, with all the Legal team members working remotely with the required equipment. Legal officers attend the office once a week to complete sealing of essential documentation.

Governance work streams as part of the transformation programme are underway, including the roll out of the new Constitution (above) and Member Training and engagement. Recent training has included introductory training to Roles and responsibilities of members and officers and the revised code of conduct, with further detailed scrutiny training scheduled, with the first session arranged for 25 January.

Democratic Services

Holly Weaver left the Council to work in London after just over a year of excellent service and I am pleased to announce that Mark Gregory has returned on a half day phased return from 5 January.

The Democratic Services team with a new shared team structure across both Councils, has recently undertaken a recruitment exercise to fill a further two permanent Democratic Services Officer positions. These are Democratic Services Team Leader and a new post of Senior Democratic Services Officer. Interviews for these posts took place on 11 and 12 January.

In the meantime, the following Interim support has been secured to cover the work load of the team:

David Penrose is a Democratic Services Locum who started working with the team on 4 January 2021. David has many years' experience in Democratic Services at all tiers of local government, with his last role being Democratic Services Manager at Horsham District Council.

Kim Amey, who has worked at EHDC for a number of years has joined Democratic Services on a secondment as Legal and Democratic Services

Practice Manager. Kim has previously worked with both legal and democratic services in the past and has also worked as an Information Governance Officer under Cheryl Lincoln.

Jacqui Northway (formerly working as a senior Benefits Officer at EHDC) is also on a secondment with Democratic Services until the middle of February. Jacqui has a great deal of local government knowledge and minute taking skills from committee meetings.

Elsbeth Tucker, Executive Assistant, has also been made available to Democratic Services for a couple of months to undertake admin duties.

Democratic Services have continued to service and support the delivery of hybrid and fully virtual meetings. Public engagement remains high, for both viewing figures and the number of public deputations. The Development Management Committee held on 29 October 2020 received six deputations from members of the public and councillors, who joined the meeting virtually to deliver their deputations. It is currently unclear as to whether the new regulations will permit hybrid meetings to continue in the future after the pandemic.

Councillor Training

The Councillor Development panel met in December to review the findings of the OPS Scrutiny panel and also to decide a schedule of training for 2021 based on the feedback of the training needs analysis received from councillors. The panel also began a review of the content of the Induction programme and how it will be delivered in May 2021 should the elections not be delayed until later in the year. It was decided that a library of training could be set up of the training sessions that are now delivered virtually so councillors could access them at any time if they missed the session or if they wanted to re-visit the session to refresh their knowledge.

In addition, HR and Democratic Services are working together to develop a councillor framework for L&D which takes account of training, the virtual environment and what needs to be mandatory, recommended and optional training, including an induction programme. This will be based on the concept of the officer "Best you can be" programme, with a view to having a draft framework developed in the next month or so

Following scrutiny by the OPS board on 30 September, consultation has taken place with members of the DMC and the planning officers to decide on the type of training required and how this will be delivered. As a result, a programme of training sessions has been developed to suit the needs of the members of the DMC members and it is anticipated that these will start in the next month or so.

Constitution Review

Following Full Council in November 2019 when it was determined that a Constitution Review would be undertaken, Legal Services now led by Daniel Toohey, have continued to support the sub Committee appointed by Full Council with this major piece of work. Covid Lockdown 1 delayed its

progress but after many hours of work, it has now progressed to the first draft which will be presented to Full Council on 27 January for approval.

The first members' briefing for this draft took place on 28 October and feedback from this meeting is being considered as the review moves forward. Meetings with the chairmen of Scrutiny are still underway. In preparation for Full Council on 27 January, The first draft of the revised Constitution has now been circulated to all councillors, with updated summaries of the proposed general changes and also of those affecting Scrutiny.

Capita

Following extensive negotiations with Capita, Cabinet has determined to remove the Exchequer and core Procurement services from the contract with effect from the 1st April and 1st January respectively. The negotiations also led to the conclusion of a number of outstanding disputed matters with Capita.

The Procurement services exited the Capita contract smoothly on the 31st December and is now being provided in-house through a shared team with East Hampshire. Work continues on preparing for the Exchequer service exit on the 31st March.

A project involving Capita and the council to upgrade the Legal case management system (Iken) is continuing at pace and is projected to complete by mid March. Our legal team will then have the ability to reliably maintain digitalised files of legal papers in one location, run management reports to help manage performance of the service and will enable the legal team to work remotely.

Capita are currently working with officers to deliver an upgrade of memory on a significant number of devices to improve performance for end users and protect service provision. We continue to work with Capita to ensure the smooth delivery of the services remaining in the contract

Support for the Unemployed in Havant Borough

Part of my work for the Recovery Cabinet Liaison Panel has been to set up a small team of Havant and East Hants officers with Havant and South Downs College, the DWP and myself and Cllr Ken Moon from EHDC to discuss the number of unemployed in our areas now and in the future and what support can be offered with initiatives such as apprenticeships, "Kickstart" and training for all ages.

At the last meeting held before Christmas and Lockdown 3 we were joined by officers from Hampshire County Council who were able to inform us of the projects and initiatives that can be offered through their schemes to our residents.