

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 16 June 2021

Councillor Narinder Bains

Deputy Leader of the Council, Community Safety and Organisational Development

This new administration has hit the ground running. I chaired my first Cabinet meeting and have met with all heads of services within my portfolio.

Community Safety/Neighbourhood Quality

With the arrival of the summer Community Safety work has been focused on tackling an increase in anti social behaviour in the Parks and Open Spaces. The team has relaunched the Partnership Action Group (PAG) in virtual form to pull together key partners and reignite the Safer Havant Partnership front line delivery across the Borough.

The focus of the teams patrols has switched from welcoming back visitors to our town centres to the coastal areas and in particular Hayling where the anticipated increase in staycation day trippers is presenting challenges.

The team has also been dealing with unlawful encampments across the Borough and strives to get the matter before the courts as soon as is practicable.

The tree service is also busy facing unprecedented demands in relation to planning applications and processing tree preservation orders.

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, where required equipment has been provided in the way of an office chair, desk, footrest etc. These are reviewed as and when required. Communications raising awareness to report any concerns to H&S teams has been made through a Team Talk item. Recent roll out of laptops requires 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, hand hygiene measures were complied with. This resulted in the compilation of a generic office risk assessment, signage, reduction in the desk capacity, enhanced cleaning regime and the production of an office handbook (circulated to all staff).

Ongoing monitoring taking place and raising awareness and reminding colleagues of the importance of following the procedures in place. This risk assessment was recently amended to include the introduction of face coverings being worn within the offices as an additional control measure in light of the new variant with an increased transmission rate.

The H&S team oversee office attendees, ensuring we keep officers working in the office and those attending on an ad hoc basis as safe as they can be.

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, reminding of 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. Raising awareness with staff through weekly information of where they can obtain support.

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.

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. They covered the office closure and were able to assist with a number of calls.

We have commenced work on a driving project, this will include awareness, assessments, document checking, vehicle defect checks, council owned vehicles.

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 Corporate Management Team. Training has been rolled out to Managers and Team leaders, so they have a better understanding of why we need to have BC Plans, during 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. The current plan

templates are under review and will also encompass working from home arrangements.

Monitoring of the impacts of Brexit continue ensuring 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 will be affected and to date no impacts have been seen.

Emergency Planning

Annual training programme is underway for the Emergency Control Centre staff. New roles and arrangements being introduced within the (ECC) across the County.

We are continually monitoring the weather situation and where required passing 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 LRF Tactical Coordinating Group meetings, HCC EP officers meeting and acted as a liaison between the Council and the LRF, raising awareness as and when required. Providing regular updates and information to the Chief Executive and wider teams.

Strategic HR and Organisational Development

The Strategic HR and OD team are working on a number of projects to support the council strategy. In summary;

Transformation (Shaping our future lead by the leader)

We are working to support the strategic project board and project team with the HR and OD aspects of this. The first part of this work has been completed recently and the workstream leads are now in place and beginning their roles.

Future Working

Consultation regarding the future working model for all staff is due to open in June. The team are involved in preparing communications and briefing all heads of service and managers to lead on this with their own teams.

Employee Wellbeing

A third employee wellbeing survey is open for employees. This vehicle for feedback has proved effective in understanding the presence or absence of staff concerns related to work factors affecting physical and emotional health. A Wellbeing Action Plan was created following the previous survey in October 2020. Results of the current survey will be analysed and presented to Executive Board. Proposed recommendations agreed with EB will be added to the Wellbeing Action Plan. Employee wellbeing continues to be prioritised in light of the pandemic.

Learning and Development

Support for employee and Councillor development continues to be provided by the HR service. A skills and behaviours programme has been approved by Executive Board for employees which supports talent development and attends to essential knowledge and skills for local authority employees. A Councillor Development Framework has been agreed which includes a robust induction for newly elected Councillors. The Councillor Development Framework and induction will support reassessment of the Councillor Charter.

Service Project Support

Heads of Service also receive support for the HR team in relation to staffing changes within their own services, focused on efficient working, 'right sizing' teams and generating cost savings through a review of service delivery methods.

Performance Management

Implementation of a revised approach to performance management will be instigated by the HR team, following approval by Executive Board. Implementation will be supported by learning and development opportunities in relation to performance management, in addition to manager and employee training on a talent module within the existing HR software package.

Equality and Inclusion

The team will be supporting the Councils' lead officer to ensure we have a robust workforce plan in place to dovetail with the overall strategy, this will include a much needed plan for Councillors too.

I will work with the leader to implement "walk and talk" sessions with members to learn about priorities in your wards and your own progression within this administration.

I will meet with all new councillors to discuss their training and needs and get feedback from our current induction plan.

Insight Team

The next wave of the COVID-19 residents survey is to be conducted over the summer months, in the third iteration of the questionnaire during the pandemic. We continue to ask questions around mental health and wellbeing, trust and understanding of COVID messaging and the impacts on personal finance.

In the latest survey, we are also asking questions relating to vaccinations and physical activity, with the aim of using results to better co-ordinate communications with our residents and inform the work of the Communities Team moving forward. Results will be shared among members when completed. I have spoken to the head of service about directing this team and having a work plan in place involving all members of the Cabinet and their portfolios.

Electoral Services

The team have been successfully delivered three major Elections with the added complexity of the COVID-19 restrictions. It has been challenging for our small team, but they have had fantastic support from colleagues and other teams. It really is a great example of team working across the Council in exceptional circumstances.

The team now look forward to delivering the Emsworth Neighbourhood Planning Referendum on 8 July.

Environmental Health

- The team are continuing to monitor compliance of the COVID regulations. We are trying to support businesses as best we can and give sound advice to allow them to operate within the law. There has been the need for some interventions although usually informally.
- We are also continuing with a COVID marshal presence whilst the regulations are in place. This provides a reassuring presence to the public and they support the Env Health service with our operations.
- The rest of Env Health are working hard towards trying to reduce the backlog of work accumulate during the lockdown periods. Any queries can be directed to ehealth@easthants.gov.uk