

Portfolio Holder Report – Council 16 October 2013

By Cllr Jackie Branson – Governance and Logistics

Legal, Democratic and Electoral

The Constitution has been adopted and will be placed on the Councils web site shortly, ensuring that the links make it easier to access. Staff training on the changes will be taking place during September and October.

Audit & Governance

The Joint Governance Committee approved the Internal Audit Charter, the Audit Plan and reviewed performance against the Audit Plan at their meeting on 16 September. The Joint Governance Committee have recommended that it be disbanded because East Hampshire District Council have set up a separate Governance & Audit Committee. Elsewhere on this agenda you will see my recommendation for the make up of the new committee to take on this important role.

Revenues and Benefits

Welfare Reform

Benefit Cap

National roll-out of the Benefit Cap has now been completed. At Havant, we have 58 households that have had their Housing Benefit entitlement capped. The average reduction in Housing Benefit is £51.02 per week.

Discretionary Housing Payments

The welfare reform changes have created a significant increase in the number of applications for Discretionary Housing Payments. The team dealt with 187 applications in the period April – August 2013 compared to 52 in the same period last year.

Universal Credit

Further details of the national roll-out are still awaited. In the meantime, the National Audit Office have published a report which has highlighted the short comings in the project to date, including poor management control, overly ambitious timetable and scope and not achieving value for money.