

Portfolio Holder Report – Council 19 February 2014

By Cllr Michael Cheshire – Marketing & Development

Marketing

Communications

Communications have been largely focussing on the emergency planning situation and keeping our customers informed concerning the flooding. Various communications channels have been used by the residents and businesses ranging from face to face messages by talking to the operations team 'in situ'; to setting up resident owned social media sites to share information as well as Facebook and twitter. The analytics on the website indicate that the website is a well used mean of communications. The team are updating the web with relevant information as soon as it is available. The Head of Comms has ensure that information is relevant to the affected areas. As we move into the second week of flooding impacting our communities the Communications team are working proactively with the teams on the ground to ensure our residents and business are aware of the support we can give them and the key areas where we are focusing our resources.

With notification from the Government on the hardship fund the Communication Team immediately set to work with the with Finance team to develop a robust but easy to complete claiming process for our customers and businesses. Customer Services set up telephone scripts for customer enquires on the telephone and a holding statement was put on the web within 18 hour of the fund being published. Formalised and detailed scripts and messages were introduced within 72 hours

Marketing of the Plaza

Use of the conference continue to grow and income generate from the use of these rooms is now exceeding £30,000. This has well exceeded the target. There have been 81 separate room bookings which have generate income and the vast majority requesting catering bringing in additional income. Projections look positive and the income is likely to grow with several large bookings in the pipeline.

ICT

Efficiency Savings

The Head of ICT has worked extensively with Hampshire County Council and virgin media to get detailed reports on call and call duration. This work has resulted in a 30% decrease in telephony costs since joining the Hampshire IT partnership. The new approach has also provided detailed management information and will allow profiling and projections of costs in a more timely and accurate manner.

Performance Improvement

ICT performance has also improved the Hampshire IT partnership has shown a consistent helpdesk performance with 96% of all calls being answered within 30 seconds and 97% of issues being resolved within the priority based timeframes. This

has been reflected in an ever improving customer satisfaction score from our 100 random users being surveyed every quarter.

Public Sector Network Security-upgrades

During the last 3 months the ICT team have been working primarily on the upgrades of our applications to ensure we are ready for the impending national public sector security compliance testing. (PSN) The upgrades include the Havant finance system known as Cedar or eFinancials and Meridio (document management) which has already been upgraded to offer better support for our new desktop.

Software Improvements

The next major IT project is already underway to bring all new versions of Microsoft products such as Word, Excel and Outlook to our fingertips. With new Microsoft products it will bring improved stability, better performance such as speed as well as increased responsiveness. The use of outlook will improve efficiency and partnership working with over 80% of other Local Authorities using outlook we will be able to book meeting directly with them making full use of technology to improve efficiency The ICT team have been working with HCC to build a test environment and will fully test it before implementation.

Website

The team continue to work develop the website HBC website and the mobile enabled website will be launched before the end of February. This will allow our customers to report service request using their mobile technology such as smart phone and i-pads.

Business Improvement

Peer Review

Local Government Association Peer Review: In January, Havant Borough Council welcomed the Local Government Association Peer Review Challenge Panel into the organisation.

The Panel, consisting of member and officer peers from other like-minded authorities, spent three days meeting with staff, councillors, partners and residents, discussing how Havant was meeting its Public Service Excellence objectives and challenges that face us all in these uncertain economic times.

The Marketing & Development Cluster led and co-ordinated this visit, which was a culmination of three months intense preparatory work by the team, including informative Councillor and Cabinet Briefing Seminars and Drop-in Sessions.

Cabinet attended the Peer Review Feedback session that was held at the end of the Panel's visit, which was extremely informative.

We have now received the comprehensive review outcome document from the LGA, and officers will be working over the next weeks to produce and action plan that will enable us to incorporate the valuable insight we have received into our business, which we are aiming to share with you by April 2014.

Business Planning

The team have worked with finance colleagues to ensure that the zero based budgeting and business planning work was fully aligned and delivered within timetable. The Business Improvement Officers work directly with each service focus our business plans on outcomes for customers and making a difference to our communities. The business plan have then had resources and skill mapping, as well as working with our finance colleagues to robustly cost these projects. Each Service now has its own plan for the future defining their day to day activities and planning out any additional projects that they need to undertake during the coming year. These Service Summaries were then amalgamated to provide Cluster business plans and provide a budgeted, and planned blueprint for service delivery during 2014/15.

Programme Management

A key piece of work at this time of year is to programme manage the 2014/2015 work programme prioritising project, analysing skill set and ensuring we have the correct resources to successfully deliver our key work programmes. This piece of work has collated information from a variety of means: the Councillors event late last year, the Councillor working group, the Medium Term Financial Strategy, Business Plans the budget setting process as well as key priorities from the Cabinet. Once these have been reviewed and priorities set (based upon the Havant 2020 vision) proposals will be presented to the Cabinet and to Joint Executive Board. A seminar will also be arranged in the spring for Councillors to continue the good work already underway.

Performance Improvement

The Business Improvement team also collect and analyse performance information to create the quarterly performance health check dashboards. For Quarter 3, generally performance across the majority of the Council's services is meeting or exceeding objectives. Services have continued to provide good customer care, ensuring that the majority of customer complaints are resolved within ten days. However, due to difficulties in contacting interested parties over the Christmas period, a small number of complaints were not resolved on time. We responded to 152 FOI requests which is higher than previous quarters

There was a slight increase in the time taken to process housing and council tax benefit claims in Quarter 3. The average time for processing new claims was just over fourteen and a half days this is a significantly quicker service than the national average, of around twenty-four days. Planning are continuing to bring down their processing times, processing all applications within twenty-six weeks but there has been a great improvement in determining major applications improving from dealing with 57% of applications within thirteen weeks in Quarter 2, to 80% in Quarter 3.

We have delivered 152 affordable houses smashing the target of 100 already however we are providing more bed and breakfast accommodation than expected. The level of Council tax arrears is dropping although not as fast as we would like. Due to the recent bad weather pay and display machine income is down But there are signs of an improving economic picture with non domestic rates collection exceeding its target.

The collection of household waste is exceeding its targets though, missing fewer bins than anticipated; whilst the levels of litter around the Borough have been reduced to below the target level.

HR

Pensions - Auto Enrolment

With effect from 1 October 2012 all workers are required to be auto enrolled into a qualifying pension scheme. For employers of over 250 staff such as ourselves February 1st was the deadline. Nationally the programme of work will take up to 10 million people into pension saving, many for the first time ever, and all employers will be part of it. The scheme is designed to help people save for their retirement through a work based pension. The scheme has not required individuals to take any action they have been enrolled automatically. This is a national initiative the Human Resources team and Payroll have worked together to ensure all processes and completed on time and comply with government guidelines.

5 over 7 Working Pattern

Following support from Unison and the decision to progress a phased approach to the implementation of a 5 over 7 working pattern within the Street Cleansing Team, we now have 20 team members who have volunteered to sign a variation to their contract. This means staff will work at weekends as part of a reserve rota, and as part of their normal working hours i.e. no overtime payments.

The proposal includes the requirement that within two years all staff will regularly work weekends on a rota basis as part of their contract. The new process will be effective from 1 February 2014 and all new employees will automatically be issued with 5/7 contracts.

Staff Focus Group / Sandy's Sounding Board

The Staff Focus Group (SFG) continues to be a keen partner in supporting and helping the organisation to develop. The compilation of the Staff Survey itself and the subsequent increased return rate is testament to this fact. With the continued aim to build and gain high levels of engagement with all employees, the SFG has amalgamated with the CEO's initiative (Sandy's Sounding Board) so that each quarter Sandy is able to meet with the SFG members, plus anybody else who wishes to attend.

This is proving to be a very productive opportunity for all employees to discuss and debate on a number of topics, which in turn is helping to develop a strong collaboration and will to support in organisational projects such as the Peer Review Action Plan for example.

In addition to the amalgamation above, the CEO has conducted a number of one to one meetings with staff who wish to discuss their ideas / observations with her. Clearly there are huge benefits to both parties in this type of relationship building and communication activity.

The Safer Havant Partnership

Domestic Homicide review – the Safer Havant Partnership is currently undertaking a review into the circumstances surrounding a Domestic Homicide that occurred in November 2013.