

Cabinet Member report to Scrutiny on 4 December 2017

Cllr Colin Slade, Community Well-being

Equalities

Training for Members and officers has been provided. A template for equality impact assessments (EqIAs) is being developed and all Committee reports are reviewed to ensure EqIAs are included. There will be continual promotion of awareness of equality issues across the Council.

GDPR

Work on the GDPR project takes place regularly where progress is reviewed and reminders/queries sent to officers, as required. There are regular GDPR project Board meetings with ICT and Legal, and other services on an occasional basis such as Procurement and HR, where such issues as contracts, tender documents and data sharing agreements are discussed. Progress is slow and steady as we have no set resources or budget for this project, however despite this we have over a 90% response rate from services on the information asset audits and over 70% for the data flow mapping exercise so far. We appear to be in quite a good state of preparedness when we compare ourselves at networking and training events but remain very aware that there is a lot of work still to do in writing service specific Privacy Notices etc. GDPR is a standing item on meeting agendas and more briefings will be arranged for Members and officers.

FOI

There has been no Information Management Officer since July but Customer First has been holding the fort admirably. The response rate to FOI requests on time is below target but we have only had two complaints to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) which have been judged as eligible for consideration, for both of these we are waiting to hear from the ICO. The vacancy has been advertised and will be filled as soon as we can find a suitable candidate. When the new member of staff starts it will be a good opportunity to review our processes and paperwork.

ICT current situation

ICT are providing all services within current Revenue Budget 2017-18

Development Team

- Successfully implemented automated stored card renewals for garden waste permits – approx. 500 fully automated renewals in October
- Working with Street Scene and District Officers to review and update systems – go live planned for Jan 18
- Implementation of new parking and permits system – go live Jun & Nov 17 respectively
- Idox work – Mobile apps for Building Control, Commercial Premises and Service Requests delivered to the business - Nov 17

- Working on Direct Debits for Trade Waste

Infrastructure Team

- Printer replacement (MFD's) for Phoenix House and Waste Services, retired two corporate printers and not replaced.
- Secure Officer Wi-Fi upgraded within Phoenix House, previous system no longer supported and slow; the new system is being rolled out to all remote sites in support of agile working
- Upgrade to Customer First Contact Centre to commence Q1 2018, once complete it will offer the capability to introduce more cost effective exchange lines
- New contract in place for supplier of network connections to all MDDC remote sites
- Monitoring systems to reduce security breaches

Gazetteer Management Team

- Continue to maintain gold standard, we have received a Gold Standard exemplar award from GeoPlace to acknowledge our achievements every year since 2010.
- The team (of 2) continue to provide support for:
 - Uniform Spatial system administration and user training
 - ArcGIS system administration and user training
 - Technical support to the Street Naming and Numbering function
 - Working with Housing to introduce GIS into their service area

Digital Transformation

Ongoing debate in this area has resulted in the decision to evolve and change services as necessary rather than the “big bang” approach. ICT and new technologies are one of the most expensive areas of the council and the new Group Managers Team will be working closely, looking to rationalise how we do things, how we save money and what needs to be changed. Inevitably this will help to formulate the digital transformation that will occur and will have the benefit of being joined up across the organisation.

Channel shift

These are the Customer First stats on SPAR as at September:

- Visitor numbers to Phoenix House now under 3,000/month from over 4,000/month in 2014/15
- Digital payments 37,000 first 6 months this year compared to 19,000 first 6 months 2014/15
- Many services now have on line applications (or assisted for customers unable to self-serve) such as Housing Benefits, Council tax, purchase of garden waste permits
- New on line forms are in development for:

- Waste and street scene and will be implemented with the website upgrade; these will include the ability for customers to submit photos and use google maps to identify locations
- Multi payments (to improve on line payment facility)

Community Engagement and Consultation

A large part of the changes to services via digital transformation will come from a better understanding of what our customers want through community engagement. At the Peer Review at the beginning of this year it was highlighted that without community engagement Mid Devon had a gap in the corporate understanding of the resident's requirements and needs. A new post has been put in place to undertake this work and they will take up post early in January 2018. Whilst we consult many areas of the community on specific issues like planning we do not ask our residents about the services they receive and the levels of satisfaction or otherwise with those services. A resident's survey is being conducted in November 2017 which will start to provide information from which to benchmark our current position and to enable planning for the future.

Public Health and Regulatory Services

Licensing

- Budget – the licensing income was £130K for 2016/17 (up £16K) with cost-recovery reaching 78% (an increase of 5%). Income and net cost-recovery are expected to increase further for 2017/18.
- Under current statutes we remain unable to recover the costs for all licences/registrations and other fees are set nationally and which have not been increased for a number of years in line with costs.
- Revised annual figures for all locally set fees and charges were updated, advertised and formally adopted in April 2017.
- Fees for beauty and animal establishments are currently under further review and an updated schedule is due before Regulatory Committee for approval early in 2018.
- In policy terms, the team have reviewed new safeguarding provisions and training for taxi-drivers. Safeguarding training is being piloted with existing drivers on a voluntary basis during November 2017 with around 40% of drivers signed up to date. It is proposed to review the overarching taxi licensing policy in early 2018 with an option to make such training mandatory going forward.
- The team secured a successful prosecution for illegal dog breeding (running a dog breeding establishment without the required licence). This followed a 5-month investigation into Brantley Bulldogs operating from Poughill.

- The discretionary chargeable pre-application service was approved by Licensing and Regulatory Committee and Cabinet in 2017. This has undergone a 'soft' trial launch in recent months with the first paying customers coming forward in October and November. This will be reviewed in Q4 2017/18 ahead of a potential full launch in early 2018/19.
- Under central guidance, the team has moved to a more proactive enforcement approach and now has a risk-based inspection programme in place for licensed premises. 2017/18 will see the first full year out-turn of this programme whilst continuing to work to existing performance targets for processing licence applications (more below).
- Other performance targets have been met/exceeded with 100% of licenses issued on time in 2016/17 and currently 99% for 2017/18 to date (target 97%). Temporary Event Notices (TENs) issued on time are 99% and 100% respectively for the previous and current financial/reporting year performance to date (target of 99%).
- The new corporate performance target for taxi-inspections was reported for the first time at the end of 2016/17. The outturn was 135 completed against a target of 120 (12% above target).
- The workload of the team is increasing, in part due to the required move to risk-based inspections but also due to rising numbers license applications themselves. TENs and new/varied premises applications up slightly in comparison with 2016. Numbers of animal boarding establishments are also increasing and a record number of licensing/regulatory sub-committee hearings were held during 2016/17, in part, reflecting this increased activity.
- Increased demand is being met through a permanent change in establishment, with a part-time support officer becoming fully qualified as a Licensing Officer and moving to full-time hours following approved business case. This will be 90% cost recovered through revised fees, further offset by not recruiting into the part-time support post and other increased income.

Environmental Health (EH)

- Budget – on budget and income for private water supply testing and risk assessment work has increased significantly. Increased performance (income) targets agreed for private water supply work 2018/19 onwards.
- Successfully implemented new charges for food export certificates and revised charges for private water supplies, other food safety work and exhumations during 2017.
- New fees for request re-inspections under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (Scores on doors) are currently under review with adoption planned for 2018/19.

- Food hygiene 'Scores on Doors' continues to be effective with over 500 premises in the scheme with 97% rated 4 or 5 (of 5) – 'good' or 'very good' which is exceptional and up from 95% in the previous year.
- High-risk food safety premises inspections met its 100% target for 2016/17 and is on track for 2017/18.
- The team formally responded to nearly 400 planning applications and a similar number of licensing applications during 2017 - providing professional opinion on matters ranging from air and land quality constraints, drainage, nuisances, water quality and health and safety
- Significant resources were committed to investigating long-standing community nuisance complaints in the Templeton area arising from the activities at a specific premise, however performance on response targets for service requests has been maintained at 95% and the EH investigation is now complete. Assurance air quality monitoring continues around the premises.
- Some high profile enforcement cases dealt with effectively during the year including an on-going major illegal/unsafe meat prosecution in the Crown Court due for resolution/sentencing completed February 2017 and determination of a Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) application. Over £40K of proceeds were secured under the application with £14K coming directly to Mid Devon under Home Office rules.
- New service level agreement and joint-intelligence sharing agreement made with Devon & Somerset Trading Standards improving multi-agency working on activities of mutual interest is now in place. This agreement also covers aspects of the work of licensing and private sector housing.
- Also working closely with the Health & Safety Executive, police and immigration agencies on activities linked to vulnerable migrant workers and modern slavery e.g. nail bars, restaurant premises and car washes. This included committing service-wide resources to the multi-agency Operation Autumn involving Police, Immigration and Gangmasters & Labour Abuse agencies in October 2017. This was highly visible and successful with one under 18 female identified as having been trafficked and working under slavery conditions (now in the care of DCC social services pending completion of police investigations). A number of health & safety, licensing, food safety and housing matters were identified for follow-up inspection.
- On-going digital transformation in place investing in business process improvements and updated software and increased performance monitoring across the functions. This includes new mobile tablet/app technology for food inspectors.
- The EH team has recently taken on new areas of work by supporting Bereavement in taking a professional lead in exhumations and assistance burials.

Public Health Plan and Strategy, Community Safety and Private Sector Housing (PSH)

The wider work of the unit in respect of Community Safety, ASB, the Public Health Plan/Strategy and addressing health inequalities comes under the remit of Cllr Margaret Squires. A separate update will be provided through that portfolio.

PSH team reports through Cllr Ray Stanley and the housing portfolio.

Play areas

The following play areas have been leased to Town and Parish Council(s) for 25 years for a peppercorn amount due upon demand.

Willand - Worcester Crescent ,Mallow Court ,Gables Lea, also MDDC are in discussion with WPC regarding the South View play area. **Play area inspections carried out and charged to WPC.*

Cullompton - Tufty Park (Shortlands Road), Headweir Road has been leased to Crediton Town Council, both sites were in managed decline so the Town Council agreed to lease both sites and to provide new equipment.

Crediton - Greenway, Fulda Crescent, Spinningpath Gardens have been leased to the Town Council, the three play area sites were originally on the managed decline list.

Yeoford - MDDC surrendered the lease. The Parish Council took the lease on directly with the land owner, the Parish Council have also installed new play equipment and will be controlled directly by the Parish.

Chertion Bishop - Meeting has taken place as the Parish Council are looking to take the play area on, with a view to improve the play area provision.

Copplestone Fernworthy Park - Lease about to be completed, Parish Clerk is about to sign the lease, (requirement to advertise has taking place).

Uffculme - Path fields transferred to Parish Council that has now been fitted out with new equipment.

Tiverton - Annual contribution payment of £18k paid to MDDC from Tiverton Town Council towards the up keep on the play areas in Tiverton, this is to prevent any closures.

Silverton/ Kentisbeare - Property Services are now charging for play area inspections on play areas that are not within MDDC ownership.

Quantity of play areas

92 – Play Areas

1 bmx track

3 skate parks

Total – 96

- MDDC has not closed any play areas to date, we have been proactivity working with Town and Parish Councils to avoid this from happening and are undertaking the yearly refurbishment assessments this month this will give a programme of works to how to allocate maintenance spend for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 budgets.
- We have had no insurance claims against us.
- Wilcombe Play area has been refurbished in Tiverton.

Leisure

- Exe Valley Leisure Centre facilities nearing completion:
 - Car park works have been finished and is now open, with the 2 electrical charging points fully active
 - The 'Class Studio' has been completed with the launch of the Les Mills Virtual classes <http://middevonleisure.com/les-mills/>
 - The new build is water tight and is currently having the first fix for M&E (mechanical & electrical) facilities. The knock-through into the existing fitness studio has been achieved
 - Fitness changing areas are currently being upgraded to reflect the investment made in the fitness facilities
- A membership campaign will take place during December, with a wellness campaign in January/February
- Darren Beer has been seconded to grounds maintenance for a period of 6 months

Colin Slade
22 November 2017