

Cabinet Member Update March 2018

Working Environment and Support Services

Human Resources (HR)/Payroll

HR continue to be heavily involved in reorganisations and restructures which are taking place due to financial constraints and managers being required to make savings. Consultations need to be conducted with all affected staff over a thirty day period and information needs to be shared, views collated and HR then works with the manager to respond to these comments. Once the reorganisations/restructures are finished there is a great deal of work to be done with issuing new contracts, sorting out possible redeployments and amending organisational charts, management responsibilities and associated areas such as Etarmis (flexi system).

A staff survey was recently conducted and comparisons from last year are being conducted with a view to developing an action plan to consider the areas highlighted as a concern.

Gender Pay gap reporting legislation came into force in April 2017 and the results have been published on our website as required.

The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in April 2017 which required the set-up of the Inland Revenue Portal to administer the input of each individual's information. This enables the training provider to receive payment from the Levy pot and Payroll will continue to monitor and action this portal.

Links with the Trade Union

Regular meetings with Unison allow a free exchange of views and thus enable a greater understanding on the part of the union as to why actions are taken but also from the senior management view a greater understanding of concerns of staff. The meetings have helped in the past to deal with matters before they become larger issues.

Health & Safety Update

Work carried out during 2017-18

- 16 x Health and Safety, safety reviews
- All commercial asset sites have had Fire Risk Assessments review carried out with recommendations made to Managers were required
- The following in-house training courses where completed
- 5 Fire Wardens courses
- 10 First Aid courses
- 7 Accident Investigation and Sickness Absence courses
- 5 Principals of health and safety
- 9 Service specific H&S courses

Accident Reporting 2016-17

To date a total of 52 accident reports have been received of which 4 were reported to RIDDOR. 3 of these were due to over 7 day absences. All incidents have been investigated and improvements made or training given where appropriate. There has been a decline in cuts to hands injuries in Street Scene due to higher cut level gloves being supplied to operative

Health and Safety Policies

All health and safety policies are up to date

Planned Work for 2018-19

- To continue to follow up on the action plans previously created and review the current level of performance against the health and safety regulations and high risk services resulting in developing action and training plans to ensure compliance to regulations and approved codes of practise
- To monitor the impact of the corporate restructure on health and safety and make recommendations for improvement where required
- To work with the Human Resource and Learning and Development teams to deliver the wellbeing activities planned for 2018-19.
- To support the Group Manager for Human Resources in developing a strategy on how to manage an aging workforce with specific attention to roles which require a high amount of physical activity.

Learning and Development (L&D)

Group Managers are responsible and accountable for their employee's training and development and as a result they have to bid for their required portion of the corporate training budget. This requires them to plan ahead and consider succession planning.

The remainder of the L&D budget is held centrally and covers the e-learning costs management development programmes and other identified development needs that are not 'essential' but desirable to enable a skilled workforce such as (communication skills, project planning and so forth).

Our partnership with CRISP has proved to be successful. This year we piloted our first "Aspiring Managers Programme" where 11 offices (non-managers) were selected (by application and interview) to attend a 6 day training programme and have the opportunity to attend council meetings that they would not normally be expected to attend. They have also been able to participate in regular coaching and mentoring and sit in on manager learning sets. The feedback has been positive and we are planning to run another programme in 2018/19.

We continue to utilise opportunities including free courses (such as Petroc's distance learning courses) and look for other opportunities to access learning (such as e-learning, webinars, coaching programmes, class based or on the job). We are also currently exploring partnership opportunities with other councils or opportunities to mirror best practice ideas.

We are in the process of upgrading our current e-learning platform to a full learning management system (LMS) which will offer all employees the opportunity to access

e-learning, design and create their own e-learning content and manage appraisals. The LMS will also hold the training records and will be able to remind managers of mandatory training/certifications that need to be completed. The INSIGHT system that is currently managed by ICT for all our Policies will also be moved into the LMS so we will soon have a 'one stop shop' for all learning and policies for staff to access. We are hoping this will be running in April.

The introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy has created opportunities for new and existing staff to obtain on the job learning and formal qualifications at no extra cost (the cost is deducted from the Levy).

2017-18 Electoral Services

The service was audited by Devon Audit Partnership in November 2017 and was rated as High Standard with no recommendations for improvement.

Electoral Registration

- Met 100% of Electoral Commission Performance Standards for Electoral Registration
- Achieved a response from 99% of Mid Devon households for annual canvass of electors, 3% up on last year.
- 28% of the returned household electoral registration forms were electronic (internet, phone and text)
- Will end the year on budget

Elections

- Met 100% of Electoral Commission Performance Standards for the Returning Officer
- Ran Devon County Council elections in May 2017, followed by snap General Election in June 2017
- Ran 3 by-elections and a fourth one is current (Tiverton Town). These included one District election (Westex), one Town Council election (Cullompton) and one parish election (Chawleigh, uncontested)
- Both DCC election and General Election are within the maximum permissible spend that we can claim back

Member Services

Ongoing support to Members

- Member Services continues to support Members with any issue that is within their remit, even if it only to signpost the member to the appropriate officer. Members have also been supported in the use of their iPads.

Ongoing Committee work

- Ongoing work in terms of Committee meetings.
- Provision of support and assistance to the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) on their review of Members Allowances.

- Working Groups in the current year have included AD Plants, Homelessness, Parish Liaison, Grass Cutting and Consultation

Member Development

- Member Services continue to support the development of Members; we are looking into providing a shared service with other Devon authorities with regard to Member Development, further information will be provided to the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting.
- The team reports to the Member Development Group which consists of 5 Members and includes the Group Leaders.
- Member Development Charter - the Charter was reconfirmed in March 2017 and the team continues to work within the remit of the charter.
- Members briefings are also organised when appropriate and shared with other local authorities and Parish Councils if appropriate
- Informal Workshops for PDG's and Committees – these have been put in place on a regular basis and have been well received by Members and Officers

Civic support

- Ongoing support to the Chairman of the Council, organising his diary and his attendance at civic events in Mid Devon and other districts. Plans are afoot for the Chairman's reception in April 2018. The Chairman's PA is also organising an event to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the end of the First World War.

Parish Liaison

- Parish Liaison continues, with a team member taking the lead, this has provided a single point of contact and has improved communication with the Town and Parish Councils and the team now supports the Town and Parish Councils alongside the District Councillors

Monitoring Officer Support/Deputy Monitoring Officer role

- Support has been given to the Monitoring Officer with regard to meeting procedures and work on the Constitution.

Policy/Research Officer

- Following a request from the Scrutiny Committee and a recommendation of the Peer review (2017), a part time officer has been in place since October 2017, his role is undertake research and policy analysis to further the work of the council's scrutiny function as well as shaping thought around future policy direction in servicing the council's various policy development groups.

Public Health Plan

The Plan is informed by the priorities set out in the Devon Joint Health and Well Being Strategy to address health inequalities and the district specific health surveillance data. The four priority areas in Mid Devon are:

- Prevention of cardiovascular disease and cancer
- Decent high quality housing
- Emotional/mental health and resilience
- Air quality

The plan identifies some projects which may require limited set-up support before becoming self-sustaining/supported by external sources. Currently this support is largely being met from a circa £7K ear-marked reserve (ERM) created from unspent (but ring-fenced) previous public health grant funding received from the former Primary Care Trust and Devon County Council.

Other projects and initiatives can be achieved from limited existing officer resources/service budgets or will be reliant upon mechanisms such planning obligations (section 106 projects) or central government grant applications.

The Public Health Officer role was funded for 2 years (ending November 2017) from a grant from Devon County Council Public Health and the Mid Devon District Council's Public Health and Regulatory Services operating budget. National funding cuts in 2017 to the public health budget meant DCC were unable to continue funding the role. Following a restructure of Public Health and Regulatory Services a part-time role was created to continue the public health role on a half-time basis, which was filled by the incumbent Public Health Officer.

Prevention of cardiovascular disease and cancer

- Since February 2017 Public Health and Regulatory Services and Mid Devon Leisure have been working together on a GP exercise referral program. GP patients are offered a 12 week program at a reduced cost. It is suitable for a wide range of people and conditions, including those who may not have exercised before, or not for a very long time. Examples of conditions include: high blood pressure, diabetes, mental health issues and arthritis.

Active Start Referrals/memberships Feb 2017 - 2018

Referrals	Membership %		
Exe Valley, Tiverton	47	12	26
Culm Valley, Cullompton	20	7	35
Lords Meadow, Crediton	45	14	31
Total	112	33	29

- Following consultation with Mid Devon Leisure management Cancer rehab training has been provided to 3 staff members and concluded in early 2018. The accreditation will assist the Leisure centres in accepting cancer rehab referrals.

- Walking Football programs commenced in Mid Devon at Crediton and Cullompton in May 2016 using the Mid Devon Leisure facilities. Sessions are held weekly. During 2017 the program has gradually progressed to being self-managed and funded. The

groups have also been connected with the wider Walking Football community operated by Devon Football Association which provides opportunities to be involved in competitions both regionally and nationally. Plans are still on the table to start a program in Tiverton.

- A new group, based on the successful Active Mums group in Crediton, will commence in Tiverton in spring 2018. The group will encompass a similar format, promoting exercise for parents with small children using bikes and buggies. Active Devon and Mid Devon District Council are providing funding for the equipment, maintenance and will be coordinating training for the parents. Amory Park has been chosen as the location as it has safe, suitable paths and a separate tarmacked area for training. Parents will initially be recruited from the Two Moors School and Nursery. Unlike Crediton this program will be encouraging participation from male parents too.

- Reducing the amount of sugar in our diet is one of the key factors in maintaining a healthy weight and can be instrumental in reducing the risk of diabetes and tooth decay. Public Health and Regulatory Services will be working with Leisure to develop a strategy to reduce high sugar food and drink that is sold at our Leisure centres. Working with all stakeholders (suppliers, staff, customers) we hope to gradually change the food offer to products that are lower in sugar.

Decent High Quality Housing

- The LEAP (Local Energy Advice project) secured funding for the next 4 years in September 2017 to continue delivery of its service nationally. This incorporates a home visit scheme designed to give households comprehensive support to help lift them permanently from fuel poverty through the installation or upgrade of energy efficiency measures such as insulation and more cost effective heating systems. The attached report shows that Mid Devon has referred 25 households with estimated savings to residents of over £8K from September 2017 up until end of January 2018.

- Power utility switching for local authorities is a partnership between Agility Eco, UK Power and U-Switch. Mid Devon District Council entered into an agreement to provide this service via their website in mid-December 2017. Council receives a small fee for each referral which can be made either by phone or via the website. The scheme has had a slow start to date, with 20 referrals (10 phone and 10 web) being made up until mid-February. There may be more of an uptake once energy bills for the winter period begin to filter through. There is a lot of potential for residents to save money however it is well known that many people stay with their current provider as they feel it is too complicated to switch.

- A Statement of Intent has been posted on the Council's website providing eligibility criteria for companies (heating specialists/engineers, insulation specialists) who want to help customers take advantage of the government's ECO Flex scheme. Each company that uses ECO Flex must receive from the local authority a 'declaration' confirming the customer fits the criteria. This new scheme may not always pay for the total cost of a new boiler/central heating system. Mid Devon District Council will refer residents to Wessex Loans if they need 'top up' funds. Two companies have

contacted the Council about their intentions to actively promote the scheme in the area and discuss the process for receiving the Local Authority Declaration (LAD).

Emotional/mental health and resilience

- Make Every Contact Count, an initiative supported by the Dept. of Health and NHS, is an interactive learning resource to help people develop knowledge and understanding so that every contact counts by asking others about their health and wellbeing. Roll out is funded by Health Education England. Public Health Devon will work with Learning and Development at Mid Devon District Council on implementing the program among its workforce in 2018.
- During Wellbeing Week (November 2017) a session on Dementia Awareness was arranged for staff provided by the Alzheimer’s Society.

Air Quality

- Public Health and Regulatory Services are responsible for providing an Air Quality Action Plan every 4 years to DEFRA. The Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) 2017-21 was approved by the Community PDG and Cabinet in November 2017.
- The plan will be critical to the future protection of public health and the prevention of new management areas. This encompasses the management of additional vehicle and stationary emissions arising directly from new major developments across the district including the Cullompton area proposals in particular. A strong emphasis will be placed on a preventative, design-led approach to low emissions strategies and sustainable development underpinned by the relevant transport infrastructure.
- Since finalising the plan Crediton Town Council has proposed conducting a Traffic and Urban Realm Feasibility Study in Crediton Town Centre. It is expected, the study ‘will fully analyse the current traffic and urban realm conditions within the town centre and fringe area and present a vision for the High Street which is based on clear aims and outcomes’. There are obvious benefits of this study for air quality and it will hopefully provide some impetus for a strategic and joined up approach to the issues. The study has in principle support from Devon County Council and the Town Council are currently working with the s106 Monitoring Officer to finalise funding.

Customer First

Customer First is a support service, providing front line customer service and admin support for all other council services.

The team is the first point of contact for our customers across many access channels and also provide the central admin service, handling incoming and outgoing post, printing, scanning and much more.

	April 16- March 2017	April 2017- January 2018	Comment (Based on 10 months figures).
Visitors to our offices	33133	26038	❖ Reduced

Numbers seen in 15 minutes	97%	96%	
Calls answered call centre % answered	114245 90% (external only) 82% (all calls)	110468 90% (external only) 84% (all calls)	No significant change
Number of emails to Customer First % responded in 5 working days	15575 99%	11097 100%	No significant change
Payments made at our offices	32327	25514	No significant change
Kiosk (self service)	6508	4790	Expect increase over the full year
Electronic payments			
Phone payments (automated)	16366	14167	Expect increase over the full year
Assisted phone payments	36538	33229	
Items of post despatched	196869	156053	❖ Reduced
Online transactions (not including payments)	31774	29185	Expect increase over the full year

- ❖ Reduced visitor numbers due to the closure of the Crediton and Cullompton Bi-weekly surgeries in 2017.
- ❖ Number of items of post has reduced due to continued work with services to make efficiencies and outsource printing to take advantage of postage discounts and reduce printing costs. This has also enabled the admin undertake other work including responding to customer emails on a daily basis and covering the meet and greet desk at peak times.

Customer first staff have dealt with in excess of 206346 transactions in the 10 months from 1 April 2017. Additional to this the team deal with post, complaints, various online applications and still provide a small amount of support to the Communications team.

Online transactions are increasing across all, service areas. Average for this year so far is 2918 transactions per month compared to 2733 for the same period last year. Until December 2017 Freedom of information was part of the team's role, this has now moved to the Performance Governance and Data Security team.

The call centre and admin teams were busy with garden waste renewals at peak times, October and November particularly. Take up of online renewals has increased this year from approximately 1/3 to 54%. This reduces the contacts to the call centre which is essential to enable resource to handle other work and maintain service levels in relation to waiting times.

Over the last eighteen months the Chief Executive and Leadership Team has commenced shaping the culture and management structure of the Authority. With the completion of the Group Managers Team (GMT) imminent it is now time to turn our minds to Business Improvement and assessing corporately where we can improve services, cut costs and rationalise what we are doing.

The Leadership Team have intimated that they want a customer-centric approach to providing services. This, along with the £1 million challenge and increasingly complex technical requirements of running multiple businesses, necessitates a review of what we do, how we do it and how we can improve it.

The Director of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation has requested a project that will look at how the Authority is providing its services and provide a cross-service solution and approach that will maximise service to customers in the short term, inform the ICT Strategy in the medium term and generate financial savings in the longer term.

To that end a small restructure of some staff is almost completed to commence work on the above project.

Complaints

In 2016 we received the following complaints total for all services:

Number of complaints 1 April 1- 31 Jan 2018.

Complaints	215
Compliments	104
Comments	161

An annual complaints report will be provided later in the year