

SCRUTINY
27 January 2020

UPDATE REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY PDG

Cabinet Member: Cllr Dennis Knowles
Responsible Officer: Group Managers for Growth, Economy & Delivery, IT & GMS, Public Health & Regulatory and Leisure Manager.

Reason for the report: to update Members on progress within those services that fall within the community portfolio.

Strategic Grants:

The Council continues to fund a number of organisations whose work is seen as strategically important to the Council. These are Citizen's Advice, Churches Housing Action Team (CHAT), Mid Devon Mobility, Age Concern Mid Devon, INVOLVE – Voluntary Action in Mid Devon, Tiverton Museum and the Grand Western Canal.

The current three-year funding agreements for the strategic grants have been extended for one year, subject to a complete review in the coming year. A report will be coming to the Community PDG in March outlining the process for reviewing funding from April 2021 onwards.

ICT Services:

Phase 1 of the workstation refresh has now been completed and 100 new devices have been deployed. All workstations will be upgraded to Microsoft's latest supported Operating System (Windows10) by end of Jan 2020.

Completed an upgrade of the Housing application system (Orchard) to new hardware and system version.

During January to March 2020 upgrades are scheduled for core systems, including Citrix and Active Directory.

Server and storage replacement project is reaching completion and any outstanding actions will be completed as part of the core systems upgrades.

Gazetteer Management Services:

A Trainee Gazetteer Management Services (GMS) Officer commenced work with us on 16 December to fill the GMS Officer vacancy. The need for training has clearly impacted on the workload of the unit but inroads are already being made into backlogs that built up during the previous 5½ months.

Additional compliance checks for the National Address Gazetteer will be introduced in April 2020. Work has already started on resolving any potential issues in our Corporate Address Gazetteer to ensure the current high standard is maintained. This

will in turn ensure our entitlement to the supply of “free at point of use” Ordnance Survey mapping data continues.

There has become an increased awareness in some service areas of the need to maintain robust links between records in their systems and the Corporate Address Gazetteer. This has resulted in additional requests for spatial training in Unique Property Reference Number selection and linking plus plotting of application site boundaries. These requests have come from both new and more established staff members which is to be welcomed.

The roll out of a software product, QGIS, slowed during the period of staffing issues but interest in the use of the Geographic Information System software in service areas remains buoyant. A number of requests for access and training are currently being pursued.

Work on updating the authority’s property ownership database remains incomplete. This was a project being undertaken by the former GMS Officer but responsibility for this has now passed back to Property Services.

Leisure:

The Lords Meadow swimming pool project was completed during December, incorporating a replacement of the pool filtration systems, installation of a replacement Building Management system, epoxy lining to the learner pool and pool surrounds to replace wearing tiles and grouting, new pool covers for heat recovery, and an upgrade to the poolside shower area.

Crediton hospital rehabilitation team hired the dance studio at Lords Meadow for an 11 week balance rehab course. At the end of the course, clients are then able to use the fitness facilities at the centre in the supervised fitness studio sessions.

Exeter Swimming Club and Exeter Triathlon Club are now training at Exe Valley and Lords Meadow Leisure Centres following disruption to the swimming pool provision in Exeter.

In August we worked with “Involve”. This group look after young carers throughout Mid Devon. This year was the third year we have been able to give space at Culm Valley for them to bring along a group of the young carers for a day of fun and sporting activities.

Dementia awareness training sessions have been held across the three leisure sites to support and understand the needs of our customers, with some staff having felt this to be of great benefit in their personal lives also.

A workshop on exercise for Parkinsons’ patients was attended by the fitness teams across Leisure. These team members will be listed as a ‘registered instructor’ by the Parkinson’s society and will be signposted as trusted place for people with Parkinsons’ to attend for exercise activities.

Hall curtain renewal at CVSC started.

In November the Cullompton Boxing Club has held the second of the 2019 charity events at Culm Valley Sports Centre. The evening was attended by approximately 400 people whilst amateur Boxers participated from across the county.

Culm Valley has launched the fitness rebranding programme; redecoration to walls and ceilings with corporate motivational images, protective flooring for the increased range of resistance and free-weight equipment, with the Matrix equipment suite now rolled out across all sites.

August also saw the upgrade to the Indoor Cycle Studio at Exe Valley Leisure Centre, where virtual classes were also launched as part of the programme. This has seen monthly participation increase from by 48% by November 2019.

Public Health:

Commercial Team (food hygiene, health and safety, licensing and infectious diseases)

Q1-Q3 food inspections and other interventions at food premises on track and compliance with food safety law above target at 91%.

Strengthened links with the National Food Crime Unit to cope with any potential increase in food crime as a result of criminal exploitation in the regulatory system, especially around illegal and unsafe meat.

Number of on-going enforcement cases prosecutions for health and safety and food hygiene offences and licensing functions.

Rolled out updated mandatory taxi safeguarding training for all licensed drivers alongside rolling 6-monthly disclosure and barring checks (DBS).

Currently consulting on first comprehensive Animal Welfare Licensing Policy in line with new regulations.

Joint Police and Licensing Team 'drug-busting' visits across 15-premises with a sniffer dog to deter illegal substance abuse and tackle associated crime in the night-time economy.

Corporate risk asbestos and legionella work fully on target.

Community Team (environmental protection only)

Developing our use of new Noise and Reportable apps for customers, positively changing the way they can access our services and report issues in order to support our investigations.

Promoting Clean Air Day and Noise Action week.

Concluding one the largest, most-complex public health and nuisance investigations in recent times in the Templeton area. Truly an 'above and beyond' response under significant pressure.

Developing two environmental protection specialists into fully qualified, registered Environmental Health Officers offering wider resilience to the service.

Service lead level

Key input into corporate Cullompton Heritage Action Zone bid to Historic England (working with our Economic Development, Conservation and Planning partners).

Managing project team to review PREVENT compliance (LA Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 duties) and enhancing Phoenix House security and bomb threat procedures.

Growing the profile and role of our multi-agency Safety Advisory Group (SAG) to safely manage a wide range of events across the district (with the Co-ordination Team lead).

Strengthening relationships with external partners and agencies to deliver joint-working across the district and beyond. Examples include our Community Safety Partnership work, Low Emission Partnership/Defra – Air Quality Hub, Better Business for All (BBfA) forum and the Devon Strategic Environmental Health Group/Devon Joint Health and Well-being Strategy.

Managing and supporting a number of Brexit related activities, ranging from being a single point of contact into the Local Resilience Forum to dealing with the complexities for new food import/export arrangements so important to our local food manufacturers and businesses. More challenges ahead.

Cllr Dennis Knowles
Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing