

Cabinet Member for Support Services and the Working Environment Annual Report to Scrutiny

Public Health Plan

- The Mid Devon Public Health Plan 2016-19 has recently been adopted and provides a framework for public health action across Mid Devon. 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
- There is scope to work in other areas of concern, for example with skin cancer, where the evidence indicates higher levels compared with the national and regional average.
- 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 e.g. Defra Air Quality bids in order to move forward.
- There will need to be further examination of the plan scope and delivery following the start of the new Director of Operations in March 2017. This should include a review of the current fixed-term Public Health officer post which is scheduled to finish in October 2017. It is intended that the Public Health Manager and the Director will commence this review as soon shortly.

Prevention of cardiovascular disease and cancer

- Public Health Services and Mid Devon Leisure have been working together on a **GP exercise referral** program that had started some years ago but now requires a revamp. There will be more incentives to get people back into the physical activity with a longer term aim to get them to become regular members of Mid Devon Leisure. The program was kick-

started in February and has successfully gaining a number of early referrals.

- The exercise referral program will be funded from the public health ERM. The cost will vary dependent upon income received from GP patients with an upper limit of £1.5k being made available to Mid Devon Leisure. Discussions will be held with the Public Health team at Devon County Council and the NEW (Northern, Eastern and Western) Devon Clinical Commissioning Group regarding an evaluation of this program and possible funding in the future.
- A **Walking Football** program commenced in Mid Devon at Crediton and Cullompton in May 2016 using the Mid Devon Leisure facilities. Sessions are held weekly and on average attended by 8 -14 players aged between 50 and 75yrs. Initially funding was provided to set up the sessions, coaching and support was provided by Exeter City F.C. with Age UK doing recruitment and advertising. For 2017 onwards the aim of the program is for it to be 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.
- All the schemes should be self-funded via member subs from January 2017 however a reserve of £0.5K will be assigned to the program to address any shortfall in pitch hire fees for 2017. Age UK is also funding a separate program at Uffculme whilst Mid Devon Public Health Services is responsible for Crediton and Cullompton. This reserve will come from the ERM fund.
- A **Sport England engagement** session was held in Exeter in January convened by Active Devon. The aim of the session was to help anyone considering applying to a Sport England programme, individually or collaboratively, and to improve their chance of success. Active Devon is keen to work with partners for the next round of grant funding aligned to the new strategy. Mid Devon works closely with Active Devon on local initiatives and was involved in this engagement session
- **Sugar Smart Exeter** was be launched on 23rd January and Mid Devon attended the official launch. The campaign aims to promote healthy alternatives and remove or reduce unhealthy food and drink, particularly targeting those high in sugar. It builds upon the pioneering work of Bristol's Sugar Smart City. The event will also showcase Devon Norse's new healthier food and drink range which is provided to schools, NHS and other public sector clients across Devon. There are no direct budget implications for Mid Devon from this initiative and the

scheme has national support from Sustain and the Jamie Oliver Foundation.

Decent High Quality Housing

- Last October the Central Heating Fund, which provided installation of gas central heating to residents throughout Devon where possible, came to a close. Mid Devon and other districts have been invited to participate in two new schemes:
- **CosyDevon** and Partners are launching a new fully funded **fuel poverty scheme**. The program is called LEAP (Local Energy Advice project) and will run for the next six months across Devon. The new home visit scheme is designed to give households really deep support to help lift them permanently from fuel poverty.
- **Power utility switching** is a partnership between Agility Eco and UK Power. They are offering this arrangement to any of the CosyDevon partners that would like to get involved. Links really well with LEAP, as the home visits will create switching opportunities. A presentation was provided by Agility ECO to the Leadership Team in January and the Council benefits from a switching fee provided for each customer.
- Cosy Devon and partners are funded wholly through the government backed Energy Companies Obligation.

Emotional/mental health and resilience

- In 2016 Councillors and staff were provided with **Dementia awareness sessions** which have received very good feedback. This is obviously an issue that affects many in the workforce who may have contact with a customer, relative or friend who has been diagnosed.
- Public Health Services have joined with Active Devon to provide start-up funding to Upstream for a 12 week program of '**Seated Exercise**' aimed at individuals who are less likely or unable to take up conventional forms of physical exercise and activity. This may include residents who have early stage dementia. Sessions commenced at the Boniface Centre, Crediton in January. This project has dual benefits in terms of social inclusion/well-being plus exercise and the prevention of cardio-vascular disease.
- Upstream are a local charity that reaches out into local communities to help people who are mentally, physically or socially isolated to improve their health. The initial 12-week program has a cost of £0.9K. This will

come from the ERM with Upstream taking over full responsibility for the scheme in the future if the initial program is a success.

- The **Dementia Alliance**, based at Tiverton Town Council, has suggested that the Mid Devon Council joins the alliance as a member to demonstrate ongoing commitment and support for dementia services. There have been no direct costs for running the dementia sessions to date and none are anticipated from joining and supporting the alliance.

Air Quality

- Joint (Exeter, Teignbridge, East Devon, Mid Devon) and sole bids were been submitted for the **DEFRA Air Quality grants 2016/17**. The scheme was hugely over-subscribed and unfortunately none of the bids were successful. However one project is held on a reserve list should funding become available through savings in other successful bids.
- The joint projects identified include improving the **Electric Vehicle** charging network, expanding the **Electric Bike** scheme and purchasing personal exposure monitoring equipment for use by schools and community groups.
- The sole bid by Mid Devon was seeking funding for the initial stages of the **design work** (highways, drainage, flood risk and bridge design) for the Eastern Relief Road (ERR) at Cullompton to a total of £283,000. This is to progress the current preliminary design to the level of detail needed for planning application purposes.
- The joint projects outlined in the DEFRA bid will now form part of the deliverables within the Mid Devon Air Quality Strategy 2017-21 where possible. The strategy is currently under development and will be ready for consultation in the coming months with an update report going to the Community PDG in March. There are close links between having a sound Local Plan and the delivery of key infrastructure and other projects aimed at addressing on-going air quality concerns in the district and managing the impacts of new development.
- The Public Health manager has also been invited (in March) to discuss with the joint Director of Air Quality at DEFRA both the challenges that local authorities face and also the successes and good practice taking place across the country. This is part of informal policy formation discussions at DEFRA aimed at informing recommendations to ministers.

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 focus groups have now been arranged, the Group HR manager together with the Business partner for each area will attend feedback sessions led by the Director Of Corporate Affairs and Business Transformation.

Gender Pay gap reporting legislation comes into force in April 2017 under the new laws we will have to calculate our gender pay gap from April 2017 and publish the details by April 2018

This year is likely to be hard with a 1% pay rise on the table which will be wiped out by increased national insurance contributions. This will have a knock on effect in respect of recruitment which is already problematic in some areas of the Council.

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.

Customer services – update

Customer Services is a support service, providing front line customer service and admin support for all our services.

The team are the first point of contact for our customers across many access channels and also provide the central admin services such as opening and despatch of post, printing, scanning and much more.

Customer Services includes Communications, Website content, FOI, Data Protection and Revenues and I have tried to include a snapshot of the work and performance for each area over the past year.

	April 15- March 2016	April 2016- February 2017	Comment (Based on 11 months figures).
Visitors to our offices Numbers seen in 15 minutes	50,297 94%	30,115 96%	*Reduced.
Calls answered call centre % answered	124,797 90% external 83% all	112,992 89% external 88% all	No significant change
Number of emails to Customer First % responded in 5 working days	28,200 (included penne testing). 98%	14,312 99%	No significant change, (Spike in 15/16 due to ICT security testing.)
Payments made at our offices	49,442	30,015	*Decrease
Kiosk (self service)	7,244	6,101	No significant change
Electronic payments	17,711	15,455	No significant change
Phone payments (automated)	14,578	15,359	*Increase
Assisted phone payments	30,730	33,711	*Increase
Face book posts	272	873	Increase
tweets	259	980	Increase
FOI requests	581	491	Decrease
Responded in 20 days	85%	92%	Improved

- ❖ Reduced visitor numbers due to the closure of the Crediton office in April 2016, these customers are now using electronic or telephone payments.
- ❖ Introduction of garden waste permits increased the number of electronic payments in both years as this service was designed to enable an on-line transaction.

So what do all the statistics mean?

Customer Services staff dealt with in excess of 222,998 transactions in an eleven month period. In addition to this, the team deal with post, media requests, complaints, various on line applications, so never a dull moment and ever increasing communication channels, with an increasing expectation of an instant response.

A fortnightly surgery has been provided since April 2016 in Crediton, this has been well received but with relatively few customers, total visitors to the surgery for 11 months 295.

Due to recent reductions in staff in Communications and the closure of our office in Crediton more work is now handled in Tiverton over the phone, by post, email, social media and in person. To ensure that we can continue to provide a good level of customer service with the resource we have it is essential that we design good digital transactions to enable customer that want to transact with us on line to do so.

For example garden waste permits started to be renewed in October and more than a third of customers have renewed on line. This helps to reduce contact to the call centre which is essential at peak times such as annual billing or elections, when call waiting time is increased due to the additional demand.

The call centre was also busy last year assisting elections with the referendum.

The corporate admin team had another busy year, to date the council has sent out 214,483 items of post from Phoenix House, this is considerably less than last year as we are now working with services to make efficiencies and outsource printing and postage wherever possible to take advantage of postage discounts and reduce printing costs.

Communications staffing reduced but work has continued on development of the website, during the year many parish councils took up the free website provision that we offered and received training on how to update and maintain their new website.

As you will see from the stats we have developed and improved our use of social media.

The customer service team also log all contacts from the media to February 2017 there have been 133 media enquiries, responses are sent once the story has been approved by the relevant Head of service.

Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection

The administration of FOI moved to Customer services in 2015. All FOI requests are logged and monitored to ensure they are responded to on time.

Further development work was completed in 2016/17, and we now publish monthly FOI logs and data sets, this has helped to improve response times and reduce the number of FOIs that need to be responded to.

There were also 3 large Subject Access Requests (SARs) within in this period.

Data Protection breaches are recorded and monitored and a regular reports are provided to the Leadership Team, staff training and regular updates are provided to ensure we minimise the risk, a serious data breach could have both financial and reputational implications.

The next 12 months will be very busy preparing for the implementation of the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Staff and Member briefings have been provided and a project group has been set up to take this forward.

Revenues

The Revenues team have been part of Customer Services during this period. The team are a front line service responsible for the administration and collection of Council Tax, Business rates and all other Miscellaneous income.

Collections rates are on target to meet this years PI's

1 April 16 – February 17

Council tax collections = 97.23%

NDR collection = 99.59%

The Revenues team have an on-going development programme and had a successful take up campaign for e-billing this year, contributing to reduced printing and postage targets.

Revenues now report to the Director of Finance Assets and Resources.

Complaints

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

Number of complaints 1 April 16- Feb 2017

Complaints	296
Compliments	222
Comments	91

An annual report will be provided later in the year,

Learning and Development (L&D)

The new L&D team includes a learning & development manager and a learning and development apprentice.

Following the audit review in February 2016 there have been changes to how the L&D service operates. Service Managers are responsible and accountable for their employee's training and development and as a result they are allocated a proportion of the L&D budget to maintain their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) health and safety requirements and necessary professional qualifications. The Service managers complete an annual service training plan to record what training and development each staff member requires over the next 12 month period and submits their training budget requirements to the L&D manager based on the essential needs. The remainder of the L&D budget is held centrally and managed by the L&D Manager for corporate training and development. This includes budget for e-learning licenses (for mandatory health and safety and other training), 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). This process uncovered some training spend that was previously not paid for from the training budget and therefore the training budget has been increased to £135k (not including the HRA training budget) to reflect the training requirements for 17/18.

Our management development programme is now in place (working in partnership with CRISP). This programme is mandatory for all staff that have line management responsibility. Managers are also encouraged to join and participate in management learning sets as another means of enhancing their skills and behaviour as managers. Plans are also in place to introduce an 'aspiring managers' programme where 12 selected officers (who are not currently managers) are given the opportunity to

undertake a talent management training programme. This will involve an application process, and candidates will have to interview for a place.

Due to the new leadership and direction of the Council we will be undertaking a comprehensive 'skills audit' during the next year which will look at what skills, knowledge and behaviours are required corporately and within each service. We will then be able to examine what currently exists and highlight any gaps and identify training needs. This will also enable service managers to focus on longer-term succession planning for their services. We will work jointly with South West Councils in this project.

We offer an excellent coaching programme for staff who can access coaching from any of our 10 highly skilled and qualified coaches. We also form part of the south west council's coaching pool so Senior staff also have the option to go to the Pool to access coaching. This year some of our coaches have also been involved in facilitating and delivering training for the council to help save additional costs. The skills audit will also expose other areas of expertise within the council which will help to save on future external training costs. Internally run courses for 17/18 include; coaching skills, time management, assertiveness, communication, business planning and many more.

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 do not currently have an L&D management system in place and this is also being explored to create efficiencies and more effective monitoring of training needs.

The Apprenticeship Levy is going to create further opportunity to do things differently and we are currently exploring how this will work for the council. We have recently introduced an 'Apprentice Forum' to bring our apprentices together on a bimonthly basis for support, networking and learning opportunities.

We continue to place wellbeing of staff as a priority and are working towards a wellbeing charter. 16 staff are about to undertake mental health first aid training to be able to identify mental health and stress in the workplace. We are also planning to look at how we can prevent stress in the workplace.

Legal

For Housing we have dealt with the following noteworthy cases:

- Closure Orders that have been reported in the press:
Anderson – regarding his anti-social behaviour
Russell – regarding drugs

- Also, we obtained a Civil Injunction against the ex-partner of a tenant – due to violence
- Possessions – these have been due to drug dealing from the property, and/or anti-social behaviour

The Police have asked us to obtain an injunction against a youth that is causing anti-social behaviour in the town centre.

Also, we have had a number of complaints/advice to Cllr's and Clerks. We have also assisted with the changes to the constitution and standards process.

Electoral Services

Elections

- Successfully delivered Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, May 2016
- Successfully delivered EU Referendum, June 2016
- Successfully delivered Crediton Town Council by-election, December 2016
- Planning for 2017 Devon County Council elections
- Contingency planning for snap General Election
- Met 100% of Electoral Commission Performance Standards for Returning Officers in 2016-17

Electoral Registration

- 97% response to annual electoral registration canvass of properties in 2016-17
- Dealt with substantial increase in electoral registration and registration deadline extension in the run up to the referendum
- Dealt with substantial increase in overseas electoral registration in the run up to the referendum
- Planning for extension of overseas elector registration (from 15 years to indefinite period)
- Planning for extension of anonymous registration (wider group of people to attest applications)
- Met 100% of Electoral Commission Performance Standards for Electoral Registration Officers in 2016-17

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 fundamental review of Members Allowances.
- Working Groups in the current year have included Parish Liaison, Consultation, Refugee support and Devon Home Choice.

Member Development

- Member Services continue to support the development of Members; Personal Development Plan interviews will commence in the new municipal year and if any particular themes arise from the interviews, training sessions will be put in place. The team reports to the Member Development Group which consists of 5 Members and includes the Group Leaders.
- Member Development Charter Reassessment – 3 April 2017 – the outcome of the reassessment can be reported to the Scrutiny Committee
- Members briefings are also organised when appropriate and shared with other local authorities and Parish Councils if appropriate

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. A successful Civic Service was held in Cullompton on 12 March 2017.

Parish Liaison

- Parish Liaison has now been brought under the wing of Member Services with a view that improved communication takes place with the Town and Parish Councils and that Member Services can now support the Town and Parish Councils alongside the District Councillors

Monitoring Officer Support

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

Health & Safety Update

Work carried out during 2016-17

- 12 x Health and Safety Site Inspections
- All sites have had Fire Risk Assessments review carried out with recommendations made to Managers were required

- Dangerous and Explosive Atmosphere Regulations (DSEAR) assessments were carried out on all sites where highly flammable or oxidising chemicals are kept
- The following numbers of employees have attended internal health and safety training
 - 75 Fire Wardens
 - 37 First Aid
 - 6 Risk Assessments
 - 5 Principals of health and safety
 - 26 Managing health and safety in leisure
 - 13 Induction
- Support has been given to Property Services to create a Planned Preventative Maintenance Scheme for all sites

Accident Reporting 2016-17

To date a total of 49 accident reports have been received of which 5 were reported to RIDDOR. 2 of these were due to over 7 day absences due to back injury where employees had hyper extended their back whilst lifting. 2 were due to cuts where there was no protection by the PPE and 1 was caused when a motorist struck a Recycling operative who was standing on the pavement.

All incidents have been investigated and improvements made or training given where appropriate

Health and Safety Policies

All health and safety policies are up to date

Planned Work for 2017-18

- 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 practice
- To develop and implement a program of change which places the Managers of their services as the drivers of health, safety and wellbeing in the workplace
- To develop and implement a program of change which places the Managers of their services as the drivers of health, safety and wellbeing in the workplace
- To work with the Human Resource and Learning and Development teams to develop an action plan working toward reducing sickness absence by focussing on the Wellbeing of MDDC employees, with an objective of achieving the Achieve standards of the Wellbeing Charter

