

CABINET – 27th JANUARY, 2011

CORPORATE SERVICES – CABINET MEMBERS' REPORT

CORPORATE LEGAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

1. Prosecutions - We have recently prosecuted a major Benefit Fraud case [submitting false information]. The defendant was sentenced to 28 weeks imprisonment suspended for 2 years plus a Community Order of 200 hours unpaid work. We have also successfully prosecuted a defendant for failing to take reasonable precautions when disposing of waste, in that she did not check the credentials of the person she paid to take rubbish away, who then fly-tipped it. We recently obtained a Dog Control Order in respect of a dog that nearly killed a puppy.
2. Section 106 Agreements recently completed include the Tannery Site in Hawthorne Road and Southport Fire Station.
3. We recently completed a Building Lease of land at Palmerston Avenue, Litherland for the construction of 36 social housing units.
4. We have completed an Agreement with Sefton PCT for the use by them of facilities at Litherland Sports Park.
5. Corporate Legal Services are co-hosting an event on the implications of the Bribery Act 2010 for public bodies with Messrs. Hill Dickinson, Solicitors, on 13 January 2011 at Bootle Town Hall.

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

A. Pay & Grading Review/Equal Pay

1. The outcome of the Pay and Grading Review was implemented for 6,100 Council and Community School staff, as planned, on 1st October 2010. The conversion from old to new pay structures went ahead with very few complications and the focus of the attention at the moment is about preparing to hear the 677 appeals that have been lodged.
2. A number of terms and conditions changes were proposed before job evaluation was implemented to prevent costs rising further. However, after receiving national advice the trade unions would not discuss these changes and they are now being considered as part of the wider savings requirements.
3. Currently there are 202 equal pay claims lodged against the Council at Tribunal. This includes 76 that are stayed for various reasons. Defence preparations continue for the full hearings in May 2011. In the meantime a number of settlements options are being costed and considered in readiness for future negotiations.

B. Establishment Control, Pensions, Payroll & HR Transactional Services

4. The Client meetings continue (now fortnightly) and we are progressing in several areas including the introduction of new process and improving data quality. Protocols continue to be developed as and when required.
5. The Establishment Control Panel has now become embedded and is working well. The Panel deal with everything which concerns the engagement of people to work within the Council. New processes/forms have been developed to streamline the process.
6. Establishment Control will be sending Workforce Data to all Service Directors on a regular basis. Staffing Data is currently sent to all schools on a termly basis.
7. The Pensions Officer is currently working closely with the Transformation team and Personnel Officers in providing redundancy/pension costs.
8. Pay & Grading has been implemented from 1st October 2010 for Council employees and for staff employed at Community and Controlled Schools and from 1st December 2010 for Voluntary Aided School employees.
9. In ResourceLink, access to My View Self Service has now been given to Personnel staff and a plan is being developed to roll it out across the Council, where employees have access to a Council PC.

C. Health Unit

10. The Corporate Manager post is still vacant and is likely to remain so until the current requirement for savings are met and any revised structures are implemented.
11. The Unit is currently reviewing its Asbestos Management Plan in light of organizational changes and amendments to HSE guidance. This will be followed by a review and revision of the Council's Legionella Management Plan.
12. As far as operationally possible, the Unit will continue to support those employees who have been issued with notice of redundancy. It will also be made available to any employee who is subject to this in future.
13. Training in the EVOLVE to schools and other activity leaders is continues. It is envisaged that all relevant employees should have been trained by the end of March 2011.
14. The new Incident Reporting System is currently being "trialled" within in Operational Services Department. Provided there are no serious problems the system will then be rolled out across the remainder of the Council and to schools in time for 2011/2012.
15. Premises Condition Managers Training has now been finalized and the first of three courses will commence in January 2011. This will provide identified Officers with sufficient awareness and understanding to ensure compliance with the

Council's Legionella and Asbestos Management Plans as well as other statutory obligations). Courses will also be offered to schools.

16. The Health Unit in conjunction with CLDU and Operational Services has worked hard to develop and implement First Aid at Work Training Course which has been endorsed and accredited by the HSE. The intention will be to offer courses internally and at a comparable cost to external providers.

D. **Corporate Learning & Development Unit**

17. Mainstream CLDU activity remains focused primarily on the identified and agreed priorities of rolling out the Coaching Skills for Managers training programme, further roll-out of the Coaching Strategy and ongoing maintenance of the Management Development and Foundation to Management programme. Of the Coaching Skills for Managers events planned between April 2010 and the end of 2011, 21 are now complete and a further 21 are scheduled between January – July 2011.
18. Feedback to date from delegates has been very positive. The programmes are being run jointly by trainers from CLDU and the Social Care and Wellbeing workforce development team, producing spin-off benefits in terms of relationship building between the team.
19. A Learning and Development day took place at Hawthorne depot which focused on Skills for Life. Throughout the day 44 people attended and completed a learning and skills questionnaire which identifies if they would like to complete a literacy, numeracy or IT qualification. This event was supported by Union Learn Representatives from throughout the authority.
20. As part of Workforce Planning CLDU have supported staff who are at risk of redundancy by bringing together a range of agencies such as Job Centre Plus, Nextstep, Sefton @ Work, Adult and Community Learning, Hugh Baird College and Asset Training. The aim of the session is for staff to receive information, advice and guidance.
21. A pilot project has been created in partnership with Coast and Countryside, Nordic Pioneer and Regeneration to create 10 Apprenticeship posts. This project has received funding and it will support young people who are aged 16 – 18 to gain skills and knowledge within a Cleaning and Support Environment. From the 10 posts created 4 Looked After Children (LAC) were successful in gaining an Apprenticeship.
22. Activity has taken place with Sports and Recreation to promote Work Based Learning. Briefings took place in six Leisure Centres where Apprenticeships and NVQ's were promoted. From the briefings 48 people registered an interest and are in the process of signing up, the funding for the Apprenticeships and NVQ's will be drawn down via Asset Training and Elv8.
23. During 18th – 29th October Unionlearn held a 'Celebration of Learning' and organisations were able to access £1000 to promote learning in the workplace. CLDU secured this funding and organised six 'fix your bike at work sessions' which were delivered in partnership with Transportation and Development Team. Sessions were held throughout the borough which allowed staff to find out how to repair basic elements of a bike. Learning and Development was also promoted and every person that attended completed a learning skills questionnaire.

FINANCE & INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Finance / Budget

Work is ongoing across the Department in support of the data gathering exercise to identify opportunities for budget savings. The Department is supporting the Chief Executive and Directorates throughout this process. The following activities are currently in progress:

- Service Level Agreement with schools are being reviewed
- A review of the use of the Oracle Financial System is underway supported by arvato
- The Finance Integration project is ongoing and the structure of Corporate Finance is being reviewed.
- Margaret Rawding has been appointed to the permanent post of Head of Corporate Finance & ICT.

Client Unit (Management of arvato contract)

ICT :-

- A new simple email system for councillors has been built and the mailboxes of councillors will be converted over the coming month.
- The Microsoft Outlook system has suffered intermittent failures which has caused much disruption to staff; arvato have a correction plan to resolve the issues by January 2011.
- The refresh of PC and telephony equipment, undertaken as part of the arvato contract, will be on hold for a period whilst decisions on the shape and size of the Council are taken.

Customer Services :-

- Service transition is on hold pending the Customer Strategy review. Work has started on a pilot for Self Serve.

HR and Payroll : -

- The Finance & IS department and Personnel department staff now have access to MyView on ResourceLink, and the first rollout of electronic payslips to Finance & IS staff is due in January 2011.

Revenues & Benefits :-

- The new Northgate Revenues & Benefits core processing system is now live. The downtime during conversion created a backlog of three and a half weeks and plans are in place to bring the work up to date by January 2011. The arvato team have a two-pronged plan that is based on splitting resources across both the backlog and the incoming work at the same time.

Procurement :-

- The procurement and commissioning review has resulted in the targeting of a number of initiatives, specifically within the areas of Children, Schools and Families and Adult Social Care. In respect of the former Sefton is leading on a Mersey wide collaboration to implement a framework solution for the provision of 'Residential Care'. Additionally, another exercise is about to commence to put in place a similar solution regarding 'Leaving Care'. Both will help Sefton best manage risk and deliver efficiencies.
- In terms of Adult Social Care an initial meeting will take place in January 2011 to plan for an Adults/Childrens collaborative approach in respect of future requirements for 'Supported Living', 'Health and Supporting People'. Sefton NHS representatives will also take part in this approach. Further, a Mersey wide approach to looking at a potential framework for the provision of 'Domiciliary Care' is being discussed with colleagues within other authorities.
- The current Head of Procurement will depart the post in late January, and consideration of a successor is taking place within the wider analysis of the structure of commissioning and procurement across the Council.

Insurance & Administration

Following a successful tender exercise in conjunction with the Council's Insurance Brokers, Aon Limited, the Council's insurance policies were renewed on 29th September 2010 at a saving of £169,500. A more detailed report on the savings achieved will also be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services in November.2010 The staffing on the section has been reduced without detriment to the services provided.

In addition, the "Members' Allowances - Notes for Guidance" document was distributed to all Members at the end of September.2010.

Internal Audit

The review and re-structure of Internal Audit is now complete, the Acting Chief Internal Auditor has now been appointed as permanent and all other posts have been filled from within existing resources. The Section has reduced its establishment from 16 to 12 posts, this has achieved a saving of circa £100,000 in this financial year. The reduction of posts has taken into account the removal of the requirement to undertake audit in those areas provided by the arvato and Capita Symonds contracts, however, the section still reserve the right to undertake work in these areas if requested by the Client Team.

The methodology for conducting and reporting audits, the reports to Audit & Governance and a move towards risk based auditing will now be developed.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT – ACE

COMMITTEE AND MEMBER SERVICES

The Team has provided administrative support for the various Council / Cabinet / Committee / Working Group Meetings and general assistance to Members of the Council.

During the period from 11 November 2010 to 12 January 2011, the Section has also organised and clerked 4 School Admission appeal hearings, involving 20 applications in respect of 7 High Schools and 1 Primary School.

ELECTORAL SERVICES

The Electoral Services Team has now completed the annual canvass for the 2011 Register of Electors. The register was published on the 1 December.

The household response rate has dropped slightly from 92.1% in 2009 to 90.3%. The total electorate dropped by 209,349 to 208,729 (0.3%).

The total number of electors registered to vote by post rose from 26,394 as of the 1 December 2009 to 29,177. This in main is down to the number of electors opting to vote by post for General Election, but a further 14,028 fresh requests for postal vote applications have been received, which is almost 50% higher than in 2009. However, records would suggest that only 1 in 5 actually submit an application.

The team are now heavily involved in preparations for the local government and parish elections, which, subject to legislations being passed, will be combined with the referendum on future voting arrangements at Parliamentary elections.

CIVIC & MAYORAL

December

December was a busy time for the Mayors Office, with the Mayor attending a host of seasonal engagements in the run up to Christmas.

The Mayor's Christmas Toy Appeal was well received and all gifts to under privileged children in Sefton were distributed prior to the Christmas Eve.

A Group of Sefton residents attended Gdansk in Poland to present Polska Tales to Children of Gdansk and the Mayor of Gdansk, whilst also visiting a local primary school to speak to children about their experiences of schools in Sefton.

Polska Takes was a project initiated by Sefton Equalities Partnership in May 2010, which saw children and parents meeting to discuss their experiences of living in the UK and Sefton.

January

January has been a busy month already with the organising of the Sefton Holocaust Memorial Service, which takes place on the 30th January in Southport. This year's theme is "Untold Stores" which sees Stories told of the atrocities in bygone and more recent times.

The stories will be displayed at Southport Town Hall on the 30th January.

Forthcoming Events

The Mayor of Sefton's Charity Ball arrangements are also now well underway. The Mayor's Ball takes place on the 11th February 2011 at the Southport Theatre & Convention Centre.

In March the National Association of Civic Officers Conference (NACO) comes to Southport with Civic Officers from across the UK meeting for a training event and conference. The emphasis will also be on the Mayoral Office and the future as all Mayoral Offices face a challenging time ahead.