

| CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT | | |
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| Councillor | Portfolio | Period of Report |
| ClIr Paul Tweed | Corporate Services and Performance | June - September 2013 |

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

A. Operational Issues

1. Weekly meetings with the trade unions continue on a wide variety of employee related matters including restructuring exercises to achieve budget reductions.
2. A full case load of disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work issues are being progressed and this includes those that are related to school employees.
3. Preparation for the next TUPE transfer of 75 Capita staff is in progress and will take effect on 1st October 2013.

B. Pay & Grading Review/Equal Pay

4. Since the last report a further 22 Job Evaluation appeals have been resolved leaving a balance of approximately 150 to complete. However, progress on reducing these numbers has been limited by the need respond to 7 large restructuring exercises where many roles have to be re-evaluated.
5. The number of outstanding Equal pay claims lodged at the Tribunal currently stands at 244. A further 14 claims were lodged during the months of June –July 2013. Alongside the above work the JE Team are conducting a review of all Hay graded posts.

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

6. Regular Client meetings are continuing with the objective of improving processes and data quality. The Council and arvato are currently mapping all the recruitment processes to ensure consistency.
7. The Pensions Officer is continuing to work closely with the Transformation team and Personnel Officers to provide the necessary redundancy/pension information.
8. The Council have now received notification of the 1% Local Government pay award from 1st April 2013 and new rates and back pay will be paid in September 2013.

9. The Establishment Control Panel is now embedded and occurs every 2 weeks, to consider requests to release vacancies and approve any changes to the Establishment held in ResourceLink. All changes to the Establishment are being mapped by the Council and arvato to ensure correct procedures are followed.
10. The Council has implemented Real Time Information (RTI) in June 2013, to comply with HM Revenue & Customs.
11. Capita employees will TUPE transfer to the Council on 1st October 2013 and work is currently being undertaken to ensure a smooth transition, so the employees who transfer in are paid correctly for October 2013 payday.

D. Health Unit

12. The Health Unit has now relocated to Magdalen House on the second floor. The new location did cause a little disruption over gaining access to the Health Unit, however this has now been resolved with a meet and greet situation.
13. HR colleagues have also benefited from the relocation of the unit, which is now more assessable to them for information.
14. Administration support for the unit has been provided by Personnel Department with three members of staff now trained in the Health Unit's systems. This will ensure there is little disruption to the service if staffing issues arise.
15. Work continues to be carried out by Healthwork Ltd for the Council, with arrangements working well for both parties.

E. People Development Service

16. A range of learning and development continues to be delivered across the Council, Partners and the wider social care sector. From 1st April to 30th June 2013 a total of 2,071 places have been provided.
17. Of this figure, 883 places went to Adult and Children's Social Care Providers (including VCF, Partner Organisations and Foster Carers). 43 places went to Sefton Schools staff, predominately accessing Health & Safety and Autism Training. 1,145 places were taken up by Council staff on a variety of events.
18. The Team continued to support social care staff following the implementation of the ICS and IAS Systems with 25 events were delivered these included Team and Business Area specific training and one-to-one sessions.
19. A range of Leadership and Management events have been delivered including Building Personal Resilience and Exploring and Developing Collaborative Leadership, these are new courses for 2013/14 identified

following the Training Needs Analysis that was undertaken in November 2012.

20. A range of manager briefing sessions have been held in relation to Managing Sickness Absence, Disciplinary and Grievance Investigations and Application and Appointment Processes. A total of 74 Council managers accessed these workshops.
21. Welfare Reform Training continues to be offered to support the workforce in Sefton. Bespoke sessions continue to be offered to suit the needs of individual groups of staff and services. The delivery of a Hate Crime Awareness workshop was supported in May and further sessions are planned throughout 2013/14.
22. Think Family Safeguarding continued, with 81 delegates attending sessions in July. The training is now delivered by Splinter Training and remains a high quality interactive theatre session delivered at a lower cost. Bespoke safeguarding children training was delivered to 60 Aiming High staff who are supporting children/ teenagers with disabilities as part of the Aiming High holiday programme.

Workforce Planning and Organisational Development

23. Work continues with the support of the redesign in both Children's and Adult's Social Care. Workshops have been facilitated for Children's Social Care Managers and Lead Practitioners to enhance their skills in identified areas. Adults Social Care has been supported with the development of its new structure, Job Descriptions and interview schedule. Interview and presentation skills support sessions are being offered to staff. The Early Intervention and Prevention service is also being supported with a programme of Children and Families (CAF) training and with a number of parenting skills programmes including the L4 "Working with Parents" as part of the Troubled Families agenda.
24. Signs of Safety training is being delivered across the children's workforce, this will enable a consistent approach to evidence based-assessment across partner agencies in Sefton.
25. The induction process for public health staff continues to be supported
26. To support Response to Redundancy, a Planning for the Future session was attended by 12 Council staff who may be potentially at risk of redundancy or are considering retirement. Application and Interview Skills sessions have been delivered to 13 Council staff who are at risk of redundancy.
27. **Apprenticeships:** Recruitment for an Advanced Administration Apprentice has taken place within the Learning and Development Team. Along with Leisure (aquatics team); they have recruited an Administration Apprentice.

Thomas Gray primary school have recruited 5 Apprentices, start up support was given once they have selected the young people.

Recruitment is ongoing with Finance, Chief Executives office and Holy Family High School.

A review of the current pay grades for Apprenticeships is underway; a strategy paper is currently being drafted.

All eligible employees have been signed up to L3 and L4 Apprenticeships / NVQ before the 1st August deadline. Anyone who is aged 24+ and would like to complete Level 3 and above qualifications will be offered a student loan to pay for their qualification – no funding is available.

28. **Preparation to Work programme:** This programme supports young people Leaving Care and Looked after Children in gaining employability experience, skills and knowledge.
- Two young people have progressed to paid employment
 - Two young people have started stage 1 of the programme
 - Another place has been put out to the Corporate Parenting Team
29. Funding streams have changed and additional programmes have been created via the Skills Funding Agency therefore a review of the Preparation to Work Programme will be undertaken by the monitoring group.
30. **Digital Inclusion:** Two Information sessions were held on 30th and 31st July for Sefton employees and the wider community. The sessions were to make individuals aware of the benefit changes and IT support that they can access through Unionlearn and Sefton's Adult Learning.

CORPORATE FINANCE & ICT

Financial Management

31. The Division is working with staff from PricewaterhouseCoopers in order for the audit of the Accounts to be completed by early September. The Statement of Accounts will subsequently be considered by the Audit & Governance Committee on 25th September.
32. The project to upgrade / replace the Council's Financial Management System is starting to gather pace, with the first formal meeting of staff from all directorates and Arvato meeting on 28th August. This process will identify the timetable, likely staffing resource requirements (both internal and external) and the options available for any replacement system. The anticipated completion date of the project is October 2014.
33. Finance staff are continuing to work closely with service departments in the monitoring the achievement of agreed saving targets for 2013/14, as

well as providing regular reports to the Strategic Leadership Team on the overall budget monitoring position of the Council.

34. Finance staff continue to support the ASC Department with 'mop up' / reconciliation of queries arising as a result of the implementation of Phase 1 the new Integrated Adult System (IAS) / liquid logic. Phase 2 of this project had been delayed while clarification was sought as to the key priorities / outcomes to be delivered from this phase in the project. This has now been quantified and implementation will now commence, and includes direct billing of clients and payments to contractors.
35. Phase 2 of the implementation of the Integrated Children's System (ICS) / liquid logic has also been agreed. This phase does include the financial payments module however this will not be implemented until later on in the process of Phase 2. Finance staff are currently mapping out the financial processes involved in supporting Looked After Children in anticipation of the roll out of this module.

Client Unit (Management of arvato contract)

Customer Contact:

36. Front line staff continues with increases in demand. The Contact Centre received increased calls on some services – Anti Social Behaviour, Benefits, Parking, Revenues and Social Care. The increase is mainly due to the welfare reform changes, with a high volume of customers querying CTRS bills and applying for discretionary housing payments and exceptional council tax hardship payment.
37. Whilst volumes of enquiries increased, waiting times did not. This was due to customer service advice resource being moved to support a number of customers at reception to provide a filtering service and customers with detailed enquiries being seen at the booth.

Benefit Service:

38. The Benefit Service is part of a working group for the implementation of the Benefit Cap. Since 15th July 2013, 49 claimants have had their benefit reduced as a result of the cap. A range of support is available to affected households and all claimants are invited to claim discretionary housing payment, Only 2 claimants have made an application for discretionary housing payment. The roll out of the benefit Cap is expected to affect 80 households and the implementation for roll out is due to be complete by the end of September. New claimants will continue to be introduced to the cap by the DWP.
39. New claims for Housing benefit / local Council Tax Reduction Scheme are processed in an average of 21 days against a target of 25 days.

40. The volume of changes now equates to approximately 2- weeks work (i.e. 4000 items). The oldest date for outstanding changes is the 20th June. Priority claims are escalated for urgent assessment.
41. Clearance of the residue automated claimant changes from the DWP and HMRC continues. In total 110,607 processes were received and over 103,000 dealt with. The earliest date for this work is now at November 2012 with a plan to clear the processes the beginning of October 2013.

Revenues Service

42. National league tables published on 27th June 2013 show that Sefton is now the highest performing authority on Merseyside for council tax collection.
43. The table also show that Sefton is now in the top quartile for collection performance for both council tax and business rates when compared to other Metropolitan authorities. Sefton are joint 6th best performing for council tax and 7th for business rates.
44. Enforcement action has commenced for CTRS claimants. In many cases attempts will be made to claim payment through attachment to benefits or earnings. However, where this is not possible cases will be passed to debt collection agents rather than bailiffs in the first instance.

ICT:

45. Sefton MBC, along with other local authorities, was required to submit a new Government Connect / Public Sector Network compliance statement, as part of the Cabinet Office's new Zero Tolerance programme. Sefton was given three months to achieve compliance or risk disconnection, but arvato and Sefton staff were able to complete the exercise and achieve compliance within two months.
46. The second phase of the Multi Agency Support Hub (MASH) is underway, whereby Merseyside Police and NHS officers will be co-located with council officers in St Peter's House. arvato is undertaking the necessary ICT works, in line with the security stipulations outlined by Merseyside Police.
47. Early implementation work has now commenced on the secondary data centre, following final Cabinet Member approval. Implementation is scheduled to complete by the end of December 2013..
48. The ICT elements of the in-sourcing of Technical Services from Capita Symonds are in the final stages, and arrangements are in place for a smooth transition on 1 October 2013.
49. The final phase of the Microsoft migration continues, with the transfer of data from Novell servers to Microsoft servers due to commence in Autumn 2013.

Risk and Audit Service

Internal Audit

51. The Annual Report for Internal Audit for 2012/13 was presented to the Audit & Governance Committee on 26th June 2013. This included a self assessment of Internal Audit which measures the Internal Audit Teams compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government (2006), it was identified that in the majority of cases the Team are fully compliant, where there is partial or non-compliance these issues have been outlined in an Action Plan which will aid improvement in performance in 2013/14.
52. The Annual Report further outlined the significant number of days allocated to Advice, Consultancy and Investigation work with – actual days 437 against planned 200 however this is a decrease from 2011/12. The number of days spent in these areas is a positive reinforcement of the Council's willingness to contact the Team for advice, support in projects and requests for ad hoc pieces of assurance work which aid Management in the running of their services.

Risk & Resilience

Insurance

53. Following the independent review of Insurance and Action Plan has been prepared outlining the improvement process for the team for 2013/14, this includes a review of the Insurance Claims Management system, working methodologies and practices and changes to the Council's internal Insurance arrangements. As changes are developed they will be continued to be reported in this report to Cabinet Member.
54. Tenders have been received for the Councils Insurance and Claims Handling arrangements and the Council's brokers are in the process of undertaking the evaluation, the outcome will be reported in due course. The contract is due to commence 29th September 2013 for 3 years plus an option to extend for a further 2.

Health & Safety

55. The Health & Safety Audit Plan for 2013/14 was approved at the Audit & Governance Committee at its meeting on 26th June 2013. A number of audits have commenced and progress against the plan will be reported to the Health & Safety Committee and the Annual Governance Committee twice per year.
56. The Health & Safety Team are working with Departments to support them in establishing Health & Safety Committees / Forums within each Department and will continue support by attending meetings of these groups.

Emergency Planning

57. There has been a review of the Merseyside Resilience Forum's business which has challenged structure, how risks are identified, the capability of agencies and how prepared agencies are to respond to scalable incidents. Sefton have played an integral part in leading this change which will impact on interoperability, the quality and usability of multi agency plans and the quality training across services.
58. Further the risk and resilience team have engaged in the following areas:-
 - creation of a guidance document for Emergency Duty Co-ordinators (EDC's) to support them in the early stages of an incident
 - set up training for EDC's to develop knowledge in responding to incidents

CORPORATE LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Legal Services

59. A development agreement and associated legal agreement with Keepmoat for residential development at the former St Winifred's School, Bootle has recently been concluded.
60. The General Vesting Declaration for the Thornton to Switch Island Link Road Compulsory Purchase Order, recently confirmed by the Secretary of State for Transport is expected to be concluded in late **August** to enable possession of the land to be taken for the road scheme.
61. A dual use agreement with the Litherland High School for joint use of sports park at the school is expected to be completed shortly.
62. The legal dept successfully prosecuted a benefit fraud prosecution case. The Defendant was sentenced to **2 months** custody, suspended for 12 months with a requirement for 180 hours unpaid work to be carried out in the community. The full costs of £518.49 were awarded.
63. The Legal Department have now taken over the prosecution of Education Welfare matters. We have prosecuted 8 education welfare matters, 3 parents received conditional discharges and 5 parents received fines. The value of the fines; 3x £400, 1x £100 and 1x £70. The Council was awarded £120 costs in respect of each of the cases where a fine was imposed.
64. Benefit fraud prosecution. The defendant failed to declare a property in Spain and that his wife was living with him and in employment. He was sentenced to 16 week curfew order 20.00 – 07.00 daily. He does have a pre-arranged holiday 30.08.13 – 17.09.13 & the tag will be lifted during this time. The costs of £466.40 & the £40 victim surcharge was imposed. Payment of the £506.40 was ordered to be paid in full within 28 days.

65. The Children and Social Care Team are continuing their preparations for the introduction of a new protocol for dealing with care proceedings cases called the Public Law Outline in October 2013. Staff have received training and consultations have taken place with the Cheshire and Merseyside Family Justice Board and the Designated Family Judge for Cheshire and Merseyside. Staff also attended a lunch time meeting with the President of the Family Division His Honour Mr Justice Munby to discuss the implications for local authorities. The Legal team have also commenced a training programme for social workers.

GOVERNANCE AND CIVIC SERVICES

Democratic Services

66. In addition to the provision of administrative support for meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Area Partnerships, the Section has organised and clerked school admission appeal hearings involving 46 applications for 7 High Schools and 102 applications for 34 Primary schools during the period from 14 May to 13 August 2013. In addition, arrangements were made for a further 23 appeals to be heard during this period, which were subsequently withdrawn and 1 appeal was deferred.
67. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) established a Working Group to investigate Employment Development and Development of Local Town Centres and Economies. The Group agreed to investigate the topic in two parts. They have made good progress and various key witnesses have been interviewed for the first part of the review relating to Employment Development which will be completed by September 2013.

Civic & Mayoral Services

68. The Mayor of Sefton attended the opening of the Southport Flower Show on Thursday 15th August.
69. The Mayor of Sefton's Civic Sunday Service was held on Sunday 7th July which was well attended by both Councillors, officers and other Civic Heads from the Merseyside Region.
70. Planning for Remembrance Sunday is well underway in partnership with the Armed Forces, British Legion and Hugh Baird College. Staff from across Governance and Civic Services will be assisting to deliver these important services across the Borough.

Electoral Services

71. A by-election on behalf of Maghull Town Council was conducted on 25th July 2013.

72. New election management software has been installed which was jointly procured with all Merseyside Authorities and Preston City and Warrington Borough Councils. The new software will assist the team in implementing Individual Elector Registration.
73. The process to refresh postal voter's signatures from 2008/9 has now begun and letters have been sent to those electors affected.

Procurement

74. Further work on developing a new approach to corporate procurement has been undertaken and development of an action plan and strategy is underway.

Corporate complaints

75. The corporate complaints policy is being reviewed in line with best practice. Initial improvements to the handling of complaints under the existing policy have been implemented and a new policy is being developed alongside the administrative processes to support the new policy.

CORPORATE COMMISSIONING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-ORDINATION

Commissioning

76. The Corporate Commissioning training session, which will form part of the Leadership Development Programme (LDP) is to be delivered in the next few months. However, as yet, no decision has been made regarding learning lunch sessions or other ways of communicating the issue. The draft Commissioning Toolkit is complete and is currently being reviewed.

Community Right to Challenge

77. A steering group of Council officers, which included the Director for Built Environment, met in April to evaluate the expression of interest regarding Highways Management & Traffic Control and recommended to Cabinet Member for Transportation that the bid be rejected on the grounds that it was inadequate in certain material particulars. Cabinet Member took the decision to reject the expression of interest on 6th June and the call in period expired on 14th June.
78. The second expression of interest which relates to Children's Centres was evaluated by senior Council officers on 16th July and recommendation will be made to Cabinet Member for Children, Schools, Families and Leisure that the bid be rejected on several grounds but primarily because the contracts for Children's Centres have already been agreed prior to the March window for accepting expressions of interest.

Welfare Reform

79. A leaflet outlining the changes to welfare benefits reform has been produced and can be found on the Council's website using the links: [Advice & Benefits _ Benefits](#). This leaflet is accompanied by location maps with links to our various partners offering advice in the area. The maps can be found using the links: [Advice & Benefits _ Where to get help in Sefton](#).