

PORTFOLIO:

FINANCE, GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES

Report of
Portfolio Holder:

**COUNCILLOR
DR LES TICKNER**

GOVERNANCE

Licensing

On 25 April many changes took place to the Licensing Act 2003 in relation to alcohol and entertainment licensing, these will affect the day to day work of the section:

- The licensing authority and Primary Care Trust are now a Responsible Authorities.
- Temporary Event notices have been substantially overhauled.
- A premises licence can be suspended for non payment of the annual fee.
- Any person may now make representations to an application.
- The evidential burden placed on licensing sub-committee has been lowered from 'necessary' to 'appropriate'.
- Penalties for selling alcohol to children have been doubled.
- Statement of licensing policy is only required to be reviewed every 5 years instead of 3.

The 5th Annual Best Bar None assessments were completed in April with the Awards Ceremony at the Crown & Mitre on 22nd May. 260 guests attended the event including the new Mayor Cllr David Wilson.

Carlisle winners were:

Best Pub - Turf Tavern
Best Bar - Lloyds No.1
Best Club - Walkabout
Best Rural - Graham Arms, Longtown
CFM People's Choice – Club Rock
Overall BBN - Walkabout

Electoral Services

A by election was held to fill the vacant seat in the Harraby Ward on Thursday 21st June 2012.

Preparations are being made in connection with the arrangements for the election of a Police and Crime Commissioner which is scheduled to be held on Thursday 15th November 2012. Efforts are being made to use alternative facilities at a number of polling stations where portable cabins are normally used. Whilst this may be possible at some locations, even if it is a temporary measure for the Police Commissioner election only, it will still be necessary to use portable cabins at a number of stations.

The annual canvass has now started and electoral registration forms have been sent to just over 50,000 homes within the City Council area. The aim is to complete the canvass and produce a new electoral register by the 16th October. The date for producing the new register has been brought forward as part of the national directions to assist with preparations for the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections.

RESOURCES

Financial Services

2011/12 Final Accounts Process

The 2011/12 outturn reports have now been considered by the Executive and the Resources Overview & Scrutiny Panel and are considered elsewhere on this Council agenda for formal approval. The Executive formally recommend that Council approve carry forwards totalling £0.350m for revenue and £1.7m for capital.

Work on the 2011/12 Statement of Accounts continued through May and June and the draft accounts (subject to Audit) were signed off by the Director of Resources at the end of June prior to being scrutinised by the Audit Committee on 12th July. The external audit process started in early July and this will continue through to the end of September. The Audit Commission will report the outcome of the audit process through its Annual Governance Report which will be considered by the Audit Committee on 26th September, following which the Accounts will be formally approved by Members. The statutory deadline for the completion of the audit and approval process is 30th September. The main change for 2011/12 is the requirement for local authorities to recognise their heritage assets within the Accounts and work continues to both identify and establish an appropriate valuation basis for all of the Council's heritage assets.

Strategic Planning

The Medium Term Financial Plan and Corporate Charging Policy, the Capital Strategy and the Asset Management Plan for 2013/14 onwards are currently being reviewed and updated. Draft plans will be considered by the Executive at the beginning of August before being considered by Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel later in the month. Council will formally consider the new plans at its meeting on 11th September.

Audit Services

There is a requirement for the Audit Manager to provide a formal annual report to the Audit Committee. As such, the 2011/12 Internal Audit outturn report summarises the work of Internal Audit for the year and provides an opinion on the overall assurance given to the system of internal control operating within the Council. This opinion will be reflected in the Annual Governance Statement which accompanies the final accounts.

The outturn report also includes the annual review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit which follows the CIPFA Code of Practice recommended format, along with an assessment on the effectiveness of the Audit Committee. The 2011/12 outturn report and the progress report for 2012/13 (quarter one) was presented to the Audit Committee on 12th July 2012.

Property and Facilities

Asset Review Disposal Programme

Progress on the programme of disposals continues. Smiths Gore will be advertising and bringing to the market 60 acres of agricultural land adjoining Carlisle Airport over the coming months. The sale will be conducted through an informal tender process.

Terms have been agreed for the sale of the Brampton Library and Age Concern shop at 1, 2 & 3 Market Place to Cumbria County Council. Solicitors have the legal documentation in hand and its anticipated completion will take place in the near future.

Following the sale of the Stagecoach site on Willowholme to a private investor, the first tranche of sales involving the majority of the sitting tenants are nearing conclusion with the completion of all the legal work. Discussions with the few remaining tenants interested in purchasing are still ongoing. Now that the Willowholme Recycling Depot has been declared surplus to requirements, agents have been appointed to sell the premises. This will be advertised and brought onto the market for sale over the summer months.

Preparatory property and legal work on the next tranche of auction disposals has been completed, these are programmed to go under the hammer in July or September. The package includes some of our small workshop units, ground rented leases and other miscellaneous properties.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Member Learning

The induction for new Members took place in May. Two sessions were run with the first introducing the Senior Management Team and the Constitution, and the second the Organisational Development and Safety, Health and Environment teams.

The City Council will be reassessed for the North West Charter for Elected Member Development in September. The assessors will meet with the

Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive, the Portfolio Holder, a small group of Members and the Organisational Development Manager.

Health and Wellbeing

From 1 July, the City Council will be piloting an employee assistance programme for staff. It includes a telephone helpline giving advice on a wide range of issues, an online health portal, face to face counselling and support for stress related absence.

POLICY AND COMMUNICATION

Finance, Governance & Resources

The end of year performance report has been to all but one panel. It will be tabled at the Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel in July. We will be revisiting the format of the performance report to meet the needs of the new panels.

Work is progressing on service standards, ensuring that the measures are fit for purpose and help to benchmark the service against the best authorities. We plan to share the work in July and will produce the first public poster displaying our current standing against these measures by mid-July. The poster will be on display in the main reception area of the Civic Centre and at a glance will highlight our current performance.

We have continued to develop the performance monitoring and reporting with our key partnerships and shared services. In June we completed a full year of performance monitoring meetings with Carlisle Leisure Limited and the lessons learnt are being applied to the performance plan for the Tullie House Trust. We will continue to develop this approach; work will begin on the partnership with YMCA around the Community Resource Centre in the coming months.

A proposal to refresh data protection was taken to SMT on 3 April. New Data Protection regulations and subsequent amendments to the Act are expected in the next two years. An audit of data protection practices and policies at the council is underway. The first stage, a desktop risk assessment of services and teams, has been completed.

Recent counts for information requests (From 7 May to 19 June):
Environmental Information Regulations requests received - 8
Environmental Information Regulations requests responded to - 9
Freedom of Information requests received – 64
Freedom of Information requests responded to - 63
Data Protection requests received - 4
Data Protection requests responded to – 5

Councillor Dr Les Tickner
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