

Meeting Date: 29th April 2014

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Finance, Governance & Resources Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Dr Les Tickner**

Electoral Registration

The Parish By Election due to take place in St. Cuthbert Without Parish on 27th March was declared an uncontested election as only 1 nomination paper was received. The candidate was duly elected and the by election closed.

Arrangements are being made for the European, City Council and Parish Council elections on 22nd May. Notice of election for the City and Parish Council elections was published on 4th April and the nomination period commenced on 7th April. Close of nominations was at 4pm on 24th April. All polling stations and count venues are booked and Polling staff and count staff have been appointed.

Preparations for the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration (IER) are taking a back seat whilst the election preparation is the primary focus of the election teams work.

Licensing

In recent months we have dealt with many enquires from liquor licensed premises regarding the licensing arrangements for the FIFA World Cup later this year. The advice to date has been that they would have to serve a Temporary Event Notice on the licensing authority to stay open late. In early March the Government held a short national consultation and have announced this week that the "Government has listened to the views received in response to the consultation" and "...believes that England playing in the World Cup is an occasion of exceptional national significance."

As a consequence, the Government will proceed with the proposal to relax licensing hours nationally for England's World Cup matches. It will be for the sale of alcohol and late night refreshment for consumption on the premises. The relaxation will last four hours, to a latest time of 1am. This length of time covers any extra time and penalties, and will also mean that customers are likely to leave premises gradually after the match, minimising any nuisance to the public. The Government believes that 1am is an acceptable cut off time and premises wishing to extend their hours beyond this could do so using a TEN.

Organisational Development

An Employee Opinion Survey took place earlier this year and the results were reported to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 3 April. This year 90.8% of staff rated the City Council as a good employer compared with 89.4% in 2013. 71.8% said the Senior Management Team provided strong leadership (59.3% in 2012). 61.7% of staff said they felt valued at work compared with 53% in 2012 but there is still work to do to improve this. 85.9% said they have a good understanding of the City Council's priorities and 84.2% said they understood how their work contributed to achieving the City Council's priorities (74.7% in 2013). Staff said the best things about working for the City Council were providing a service to the people of Carlisle, working with good colleagues, training opportunities and terms and conditions.

A wellbeing and learning day for staff and Members will be taking place on Wednesday 7 May at the Civic Centre as part of the City Council's programme of health and wellbeing activities. There will be a wide range of information about health and wellbeing issues as well as health checks offered by the Occupational Health nurses. A healthy eating cookery demonstration will be given by local chef, John Crouch, and hair and beauty students from Carlisle College will be building up their experience of working with clients. Information about learning and development opportunities including courses and qualifications will also be available.

A new season of lunchtime learning sessions for staff and Members started in April with a workshop on getting the most from your camera. Further workshops are being developed and will continue to cover a wide range of topics.

Legal Services

Legal Services have this month installed a case management system, which it is hoped will enable the team to adopt an almost paperless system. Already the system is proving beneficial. The usual legal work continues with advice being provided to clients in Economic Development, Local Environment, Resources and Councillors. Five prosecutions have been successfully prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court and numerous licences and section 106 agreements have completed

Building and Facilities Projects April 2014

Electric Vehicle Charging Points – Civic Centre

The County Council have received Government funding to provide charging stations for electric vehicles. The Civic Centre has been identified as a location for 2 of these, the car park at the end of Lowther Street being the preferred location. The charge points will be used by County Council staff who plan to set up a fleet of electric pool cars, but they will also be available for the public to use.

Civic Centre Refurbishment

Planning has begun on refurbishment of floors 3 and 4 – both occupied by the County Council, completion is planned for the end of August.

Civic Centre 50th Anniversary Open Day

The open day was very successful and provided an opportunity for around 200 members of the public to look around the building and take in the exhibitions and presentations laid on for the occasion. In particular, having seen the inside of the building for themselves, the open day improved most of the visitors' opinion of the Civic Centre.

Financial Services

2013/14 Final Accounts Process

Work is continuing on the production of both the revenue and capital outturn reports, which will be considered by the Executive on 23rd June and by Council on 15th July. These will show the year end outturn position and highlight any slippage against the annual budget. The annual Statement of Accounts are also being produced which will be prepared in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations in time for the External Auditors to commence the audit of the accounts in early July.