



Report to

Council

Meeting Date: 8th November 2022

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Finance, Governance & Resources Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Gareth Ellis**

FINANCIAL SERVICES

At the time of writing the audit of the 2021/22 Statement of Accounts is ongoing and nearing its conclusion with an expectation from the Auditors that this can be completed by the end of October. A special Audit Committee is scheduled for 11th November to consider the Audit Findings Report and the Audited Statement of Accounts.

Work is starting on supporting the budget process for 2023/24 for Cumberland Council.

HR & PAYROLL

- **LGR:** Updates on progress of the various workstreams associated with LGR activity are provided to stakeholders on a regular basis through the dedicated Communications group
- **TUPE:** The HR and Payroll Service is busy preparing for the TUPE of Carlisle City Council staff to the new Cumberland Authority on 1st April 2023. The preparation involves a significant amount of information checking and preparation of records for handover, which will utilise any spare time the team may have from now until the process is complete early next year

ICT UPDATE

- LGR – Day 1 requirements from ICT is the primary focus for the service. Carlisle ICT is leading on Networking, Service Management and Policy & Performance
- LGR – The HR and OD IT business system needs of the two new authorities continues to be supported by Carlisle ICT via the workstream
- LGR – The Place Board is being supported by Carlisle ICT via the workstream
- Photocopier replacement– Arrival of new equipment now due in November
- Laptop Replacement – Replacement of end user laptops 40% completed. Currently planning roll-out schedule on remaining laptops

- Successful recruitment to the ICT Helpdesk Analyst post (starting in December) and ICT Helpdesk Supervisor (starting end of October)
- Applications received for Senior Infrastructure Engineer post & Senior Applications Support/Developer post. Interviews to take place on 11th November
- Wi-Fi Replacement – Equipment ordered with supplier as delivery timescales expected to be early 2023

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

The Elections Team are still working on the Annual Canvass and have just over 3,800 outstanding properties out of just over 54,000. The non-responding properties are being personally canvassed from now until the end of November, with publication of the new Electoral Register on 1st December 2022.

Work continues on the procurement for a new Election Management System for Cumberland Council and three Election Management Systems have given demonstrations in the last week. Work is being done to score these systems at present, with an outcome expected by the end of the week (21st October).

LEGAL SERVICES

The Fireshow is going ahead this year and Officers within Legal Services have prepared the necessary road closure orders, agreements with event security and contracts with the fireworks operator.

The Christmas light switch on is also going ahead this year and various agreements have been prepared with the performers and acts involved.

A number of legal agreements have been required to support the Sustainable Warmth project including six contracts for works, two project surveys, three JCT contracts, one IT contract, Memoranda of Understanding for all the district authorities involved and Data Sharing Agreements for all the district authorities. Around 450 Land Charges Searches have also been carried out to support applicants.

Five grant funding agreements have been completed to support the Towns Deal projects.

As a result of planning decisions, a number of Section 106 Agreements have been entered into, with some awaiting information on nutrient neutrality, as well as footpath orders to enable development to proceed. Legal Officers are supporting planning colleagues with various enforcement matters.

The lease agreement for Units 3 - 5 Gateway 44 Kingstown (Home Bargains) has now completed. Two other leases, four consents to underlet and one licence to assign have been completed. Legal Officers are also working on renewing temporary pavement café licences within the city.

In the Courts, five environmental crime prosecutions have been submitted so far in October, mainly fly tipping, and in September we appeared in Court to prosecute a range of offences including abandoned vehicles, littering and failing to update dog microchips, resulting in a total of £2947.94 fines and costs being ordered.

ANIMAL LICENCING

The Food & Public Protection Team are seeing a significant increase in the number of individuals breeding dogs and advertising for sale puppies, without the required licence. The animal licensing regime, enforced by Officers of the Council, is in place to ensure that the wellbeing of animals is protected when used for licensable activities. Where Officers identify unlicensed breeders advertising on websites used for the sale of pets, action is taken to have these adverts blocked and taken down; however the use of personal social media sites is increasing to advertise the sale of puppies. To increase public awareness of the illegal puppy trade and the awful conditions some of these dogs are kept, the Food & Public Protection Team intend to launch a publicity campaign in the lead up to Christmas. The campaign will highlight the welfare issues and suffering animals can experience if the breeding activities are not monitored and regulated by the Local Authority. It will provide advice to prospective buyers and signpost to the Authorities website where a list of licenced breeders can be found. Of the 69 licences issued by the authority for animal welfare related activities, 31 are for the activity of dog breeding.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT – LEGAL SERVICES

Recent counts for information requests (From 20/08/2022 – 17/10/2022):

- Environmental Information Regulations requests received - 8
- Environmental Information Regulations requests responded to - 10
- Freedom of Information Act requests received – 83
- Freedom of Information Act requests responded to - 80
- Data Protection Act requests received – 6
- Data Protection Act requests responded to – 6

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Offered a number of CV development support sessions to senior managers, middle managers and staff in preparation of LGR
- Change workshops delivered across the Council
- Dignity and Respect training planned to take place with front line workers in October