

Report to:

Council

Agenda
Item

11(b)(ii)

Meeting Date: 7th January 2014

Public/Private*: Public

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

GOVERNANCE

Legal Services

The sales following the auction on 16th October have now completed and the next phase of the property disposals programme will commence. Two other projects, the Fire Station and the City Centre WiFi project, are now underway and detailed legal input is required including the preparation of contracts and other legal documentation. Six criminal cases have been successfully prosecuted at the magistrates' courts – summonses were raised for benefit fraud and environmental offences. Officers have also been busy drafting two complex Framework Agreements, several s106 (planning) agreements, numerous contracts and development agreements and continue to provide specialist advice and support to all directorates and Members.

Licensing

The new Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 has been reported previously. The charging administrative and charging function is the responsibility of the Executive and the necessary reports have been prepared and adopted. Formatting of software, templates, vehicle licences have all been prepared and we have started to issue the new licences. A number of old licence holders have not applied, despite repeated mail shots with information. Necessary enforcement action will take place once current applications have been determined.

The Carlisle & Eden Best Bar None 2013 judging was completed in October and the awards were presented at a function at the Shepherds Inn on Tuesday 19 November. The Chief Constable, Mayor and other civic dignitaries from Carlisle and Eden were present.

The winners for Carlisle were:

- Best Bar None 2013 – Lloyd's No.1
- Best Club – Walkabout
- Best Pub – Turf Tavern
- Best Bar – Lloyd's No.1
- Best Rural - Graham Arms Hotel, Longtown
- Best Suburban premises – Gosling Bridge
- Best Hotel Bar – The Hallmark

On the financial front, fees under the Licensing Act 2003 are coming in this month, approx 400 transactions in total which accounts for nearly 50% of licensing annual income.

Electoral Services

The Annual Canvass is progressing. A total of just over 50000 initial forms were sent out at the start of October. The reminders were run towards the end of October and just over 22000 reminders were sent out at the start of November. Canvassers are now chasing up the non responders. The new register needs to be published in early February 2014.

The review of polling districts and polling places has now been completed and the report on the outcome of the review is considered elsewhere on the agenda.

Individual Electoral Registration (IER) continues to take up a considerable amount of time in both attending seminars/ courses and preparing documents such as the public engagement strategy, risk plan, project plan etc. in preparation for going live with IER in the summer of 2014. Members have recently received a presentation from a representative of the Cabinet Office on the introduction of IER as from June 2014.

Initial planning has been commenced with some preliminary arrangements made in respect of the joint European and City Council elections that are scheduled to be held on 22nd May 2014.

Health & Safety

Main areas of work:

- Working with the Refuse and Recycling team to comply with Improvement Notice served by HSE currently applying for an extension for meeting notice to the end March 2014

- Review of Environmental Performance / Energy Usage 2012/13
- Shared Services Risk Assessment Review
- Tullie House workstation assessments
- Review of Fire Risk Assessments for Civic Centre
- Re-engage safety audit process with Talkin Tarn

RESOURCES

Financial Services

Annual Audit Letter 2012/13

The Audit Commission have issued their annual audit letter which contains very positive comments in respect of the work undertaken by the authority during 2012/13. This report is being considered by the Audit Committee on 24th January.

Strategic Planning

The budget reports for 2014/15 to 2018/19 have been considered by the Executive and relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panels, with the Executive issuing its draft Budget Proposals for consultation purposes at its meeting on 16th December. The consultation process will end on 12th January with feedback being considered by the Executive later that week, following which the Executive will make final budget recommendations to Council on 4th February 2014. The savings required to ensure a balance budget is approved continues to be closely monitored by both SMT and the Transformation Board.

Digital and Information Services

Staff are participating in “train the trainer” training which is going extremely well.

This will enable D& IS staff to have the skills to deliver various training packages which will include:

- ICT Induction programmes (Officer and member)
- Office systems / Applications
- Digital security

Staff have also been busy implementing the recommendations of both the Audit of the IT Service Desk, Incident and Problem Management and the Business Continuity Audit. Whilst interim arrangements have been put in place to reduce the risk to Carlisle City Council in the short term both are on track to be completed by 31st March 2014 as agreed.

Work continues to engage with partner organisations in the third sector. The main project in this area at present is the proposed partnership between Deaf Vision and D &IS. Deaf Vision, a County wide charity have sold their Compton Street Offices and are looking to relocate and implement a agile mobile working solution for all their staff rather than be dependent on a future fixed base and have chosen D &IS as their preferred partner. Implementation of this project will enable Carlisle City Council to provide the skills and expertise with only a minimal impact on resources whilst generating income and benefit to the community. A similar agile working solution for Cumbria CVS in Barrow and Kendal offices was implemented successfully last month.

- Successful award of installation contract for Civic Wifi – installation currently underway for go-live by end of January 2014.
- Evaluation and procurement of mobile printing solution – Everyone Print – to work with Konica Minolta Copiers – Go live of January 2014.
- Procurement and implementation of Mobile devices for Councillors
- Successful installation of PC's and Smartboard conference facility for the RGN Hub at Brampton Community Centre.
- Tender process for Carlisle City Centre Wifi now shortlisted to 4 potential suppliers – Tenders to be completed by 20th December with Award in January and implementation starting March 2014.

We also continue to implement the transformation element on the City Council's website that enable customers to access online services such as Council Tax , NNDR and Housing Benefits.

Property and Facilities

Property Services – Disposal Programme

The disposal of the 3 assets, Treasury Court, Willowholme Industrial Estate and the Willowholme Depot, which went to auction in October, have now all been legally completed. In aggregate they realised circa £545,000 which takes the gross proceeds for all sales to date to a figure slightly in excess of £6m. Officers are now undertaking the preparatory work on the next tranche of assets which will come forward for disposal in the New Year, including several sites which have potential for future housing development.

Building and Facilities Projects December 2013

Tullie House

The re-covering of the roof of the Victorian building that houses the paintings and costumes collections has been completed. The original material was asphalt and in very poor condition. The new material is "Sarnafil" a single-layer pvc membrane with a 20 year guarantee. An additional outlet was formed as part of the project to reduce the risk of flooding due to a blocked outlet.

The project raised serious concerns about the risk of water ingress to the valuable collections below and also the risk of theft using the scaffolding and the vulnerability of the roof during the work as an opportunity. A stand – alone wireless alarm, monitored via the internet , was purchased and used on the project. In the event of an alarm the system sends a text message to a mobile phone monitored by a local security company who would send a patrolman to the site. Fortunately there were no alarms during the work, false or real. The roof has now been fully re-instated and the scaffold removed. The project included insulating the roof to a high standard.

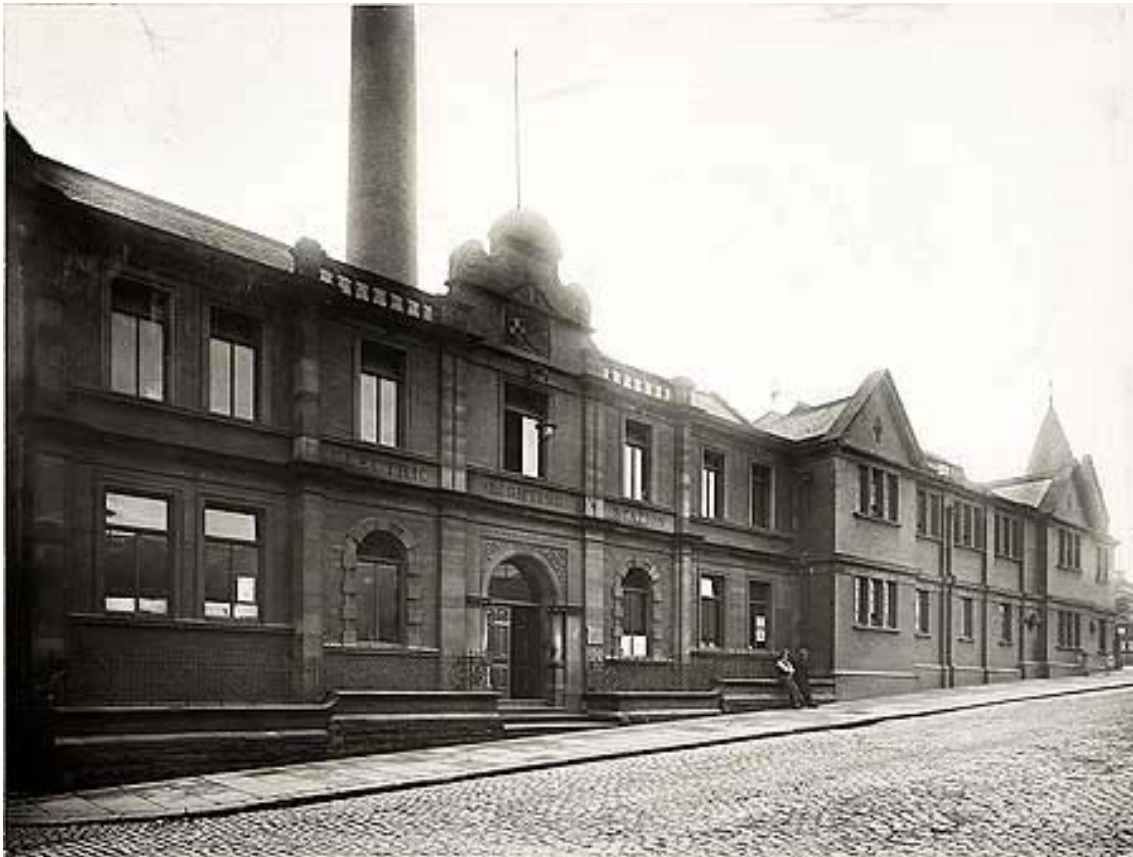
A separate document showing before and after photographs is attached).

Enterprise Centre

Work is ongoing to re-instate a suite of offices facing James Street that was damaged by flash flooding in July. An outbreak of dry rot was discovered during the strip out of damaged dry lining. The cause of the outbreak was a blocked gutter outlet / rainwater pipe. New access to the gutter has been created to enable regular checking and cleaning. An overflow chute has also been installed to prevent flooding to the inside.

Also at the Enterprise Centre the asphalt roof of Unit 42 has been re-covered with Sarna single layer pvc membrane. This is the start of a much larger programme of roof coverings to deal with the entire building over the next few years.

The stone repairs to the James Street facade of the building are now complete and the carved "Electric Lighting Station" lettering has been restored to a high standard by our in-house mason, Kevin Harkness who has been trained in these skills over the last few years.



**Photograph of the Electric Lighting Station in 1900, shortly after construction
(copyright English Heritage, John Laing Collection)**

Civic Centre

A meeting has been held with the County Council with a view to carrying out refurbishment of floors 3 and 4 (the last remaining upgraded floors in the building). The work is planned to commence in March 2014

Information Management

Service Standards

The second quarter performance report containing the service standards has been round the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and Executive in November and December. Performance against the service standards is generally positive with all targets being met. New standards have been developed to determine public satisfaction with local environment services.

Carlisle Plan

An update on the Plan is included in the performance report and is being implemented as projected. The delivery of the transit traveller site and Carlisle Story projects has both shown significant positive developments.

Community Asset Register

Over 50 assets have now been nominated under Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011 for listing on the Community Asset Register. The majority of nominations are by parish councils. Each nomination is being assessed against the criteria before listing on the register. The Act gives community groups the right to nominate and then, should the circumstances arise, the opportunity to bid for local assets, if and when they are sold on the open market.

Information Management

Recent counts for information requests (From 16 October to 1 December):

- Environmental Information Regulations requests received - 20
- Environmental Information Regulations requests responded to - 20
- Freedom of Information requests received – 85
- Freedom of Information requests responded to - 68
- Data Protection Act subject access requests received - 1
- Data Protection Act subject access requests responded to – 0
- Data Protection Act s29/s35 requests received - 6
- Data Protection Act s29/s35 requests responded to – 4

Organisational Development

The seventh annual Celebration of Learning event took place at Tullie House on 3 December 2013 to celebrate the success of staff who achieved qualifications that year. The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive spoke of the importance of investing in staff development and how this benefits the city as well as the organisation. Two members of staff also spoke about their experiences of learning and the difference it has made to them.

Carlisle City Council supported Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day campaign by encouraging staff and Members to come to work on Friday 13 December wearing a Christmas jumper and donate £1 to the charity.

The annual Employee Opinion Survey takes place in January to find out how Carlisle City Council staff feel about working for the organisation. In 2013, 89.4% of staff rated the City Council as a good employer. The results of the 2014 survey will be shared with staff and Members in March.

APPENDIX



BEFORE – Looking North



BEFORE – Looking South

APPENDIX



AFTER – Looking south



AFTER – Looking north