

PORTFOLIO:

FINANCE, GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES

Report of
Portfolio Holder:

**COUNCILLOR
DR LES TICKNER**

GOVERNANCE

Licensing

This is a busy month for Licensing with 214 Hackney Carriage and 270 drivers' renewals to be processed. We have seen a slight upturn in new premises applications under the Licensing Act 2003 these last few of months, compared with many closures over the last couple of years. This could indicate an improvement in the local economy. We currently have an unprecedented three taxi drivers who have had their driving licences revoked by the Regulatory Panel, all appealing to the Magistrates Court. Two are to be heard in August and one September.

Electoral Services

Preparations are continuing in connection with the arrangement for the election of a Police and Crime Commissioner which is scheduled to be held on Thursday 15th November 2012.

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.

RESOURCES

Financial Services

2011/12 Final Accounts Process

The annual statement of accounts (subject to Audit) were scrutinised by the Audit Committee on 12th July and are currently subject to audit by the Audit Commission which 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.

Strategic Planning

The Medium Term Financial Plan and Corporate Charging Policy, the Capital Strategy and the Asset Management Plan for 2013/14 onwards have been considered by the Executive and the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel. These are presented elsewhere on this agenda for formal approval by Council, and once approved, will inform the detailed work required to enable a balanced budget for 2013/14 to be approved by Council in February 2013. A timetable for the process will be prepared and reports on the core budgets, individual spending pressures and savings, and the charging reports will be considered by the Executive and the relevant overview and scrutiny panels in November and December.

Audit Services

The Audit Committee on 12th July 2012 received the outturn report which summarised the work of Internal Audit delivered through the shared service arrangement in 2011/12 and also provided a satisfactory opinion in regards to the overall assurance given to the system of internal control operating within the Council.

The outturn report also included the annual review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit which followed CIPFA's best practice approach. The Committee then received Internal Audit's progress report for 2012/13. It was reported that good progress had been made in the first quarter period – up to w/e 22nd June 2012, 145 direct audit days (26.9%) had been delivered, which is ahead of target that position in the year.

The key matters arising from the 'lessons learnt' exercise undertaken by Internal Audit on the Connect 2 Cycleway Scheme was presented to Members and a further 9 planned audit reports were also considered.

<u>Audit of:</u>	<u>Assurance Rating:</u>
Car Parking	Reasonable
Housing & Council Tax Benefits	Reasonable
National Non Domestic Rates	Reasonable
Payroll	Reasonable
Creditors	Reasonable
Network Controls	Reasonable
Safeguarding – CRB Checks	Reasonable
Tendering and Contracting	Restricted
Facilities Management	Reasonable

Property and Facilities

Asset Review Disposal Programme

The programme of asset sales continues in line with the Business Plan through the successful conclusion of a number of transactions in July and August. On the 10th July the portfolio of workshops at Hewson Street and Port Road went under the hammer at auction realising prices slightly in excess of their reserves. The transfer of the Brampton Library and Age Concern shop at 1, 2 and 3 Market Place Brampton to the County Council has also now been completed. The overall position to date with the Disposal Programme is that sales have produced gross receipts of circa £2.6 million, which is about 18% above target projections. Going forward the sale of the Airport Agricultural Land is imminent, following an extensive advertising and marketing exercise undertaken on behalf of the Council by the local land agents Smiths Gore. The tender closing date for the receipt of offers was 10th September.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Member Learning and Development

On 11 September 2012 the City Council will be reassessed for the NW Charter for Member Development which it was originally awarded in 2005. The Leader of the City Council, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Resources, members of the Member Learning and Development Working Group, other Members, the Chief Executive and other staff will be interviewed as part of the assessment process.

Councillor Dr Les Tickner
Finance, Governance & Resources Portfolio Holder