

Meeting Date: 27th April 2021

Public/Private*: Public

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

FINANCIAL SERVICES

2019/20 and 2020/21 Final Accounts Process

Work is continuing to conclude the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts and work is commencing on the 2020/21 closedown process to enable the draft Statement of Accounts to be prepared and approved by the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources by the statutory deadline of 31st July. The publication dates for draft and audited accounts for Local Authorities in England has been extended from 1st June and 31st July to 1st August and 30th September respectively for the next two accounting years (2020/21 and 2021/22).

The Council is continuing to monitor the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and is submitting returns to MHCLG on a monthly basis outlining the actual and potential financial losses being incurred. The Council is also continuing to work closely with other authorities around Cumbria to understand the impact on wider issues such as Council Tax and Business Rates.

ICT UPDATE

- The Microsoft licensing three-year agreement is due for renewal and all work has been completed to understand Carlisle's licensing requirements for the next three years whilst taking advantage of any discounts and subscription options to ensure best value for money
- A new and improved arrangement with a new supplier, to support patching and updates of some of the Council's key infrastructure has been agreed and procured

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

The Elections Team are continuing with the planning of the Elections on 6th May 2021 (Police & Crime Commissioner, City Council and County Council by-elections and Parishes). There are local by-elections in Brampton County Division and the City Wards

Cathedral & Castle, Harraby South & Parklands and Newtown & Morton North. The nomination period ends at 4.00 p.m. on 8th April.

The plans are progressing well and all staff have now been appointed and all the venues are booked, however, there have been a number of changes to Polling Station venues, due to availability issues regarding Covid-19. The team are working closely with the Health & Safety Team to ensure that everything possible is in place to ensure Staff and Candidate/Agent safety.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Further attendances by Managers on the MCF(2) workshops including Coaching & Developing Others, a new workshop within the programme
- Joint Staff and Member workshops including Visual Awareness, Speed Reading & Retention and Memory Skills & Mind Mapping

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT – LEGAL SERVICES

Recent counts for information requests (from 31st January 2021 – 6th April 2021):

- Environmental Information Regulations requests received - 10
- Environmental Information Regulations requests responded to - 11
- Freedom of Information Act requests received – 124
- Freedom of Information Act requests responded to - 116
- Data Protection Act requests received – 7
- Data Protection Act requests responded to – 6

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Work is ongoing to refresh the Council's performance management arrangements through a review of 2020/21 measures (Key Performance Indicators and Service Standards) and the performance reporting. The 2020/21 End of Year Performance Report will be presented to Scrutiny Panels and the Executive in June.

FUNDING STRATEGY

Work is ongoing to refresh the Council's Funding Strategy. Areas of focus include:

- Building on previous successes
- Identifying any gaps in our ability to deliver on the funding strategy
- Mapping of funding into Carlisle – impact and opportunities
- Impact of funds distributed by Carlisle City Council
- Developing key strategic contacts to improve the funding success and impact
- Links with Borderlands, Towns Fund, High Street Fund etc
- Link to Medium Term Financial Plan –opportunities to support savings, capital projects
- How will success be monitored in future? When will it be reviewed?
- Links with new Open4Business Portal