

Meeting Date: 26th April 2022

Public/Private*: Public

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

FINANCIAL SERVICES

The last budget for Carlisle City Council was set in February and Council Tax approved in March. Work is now underway to closedown the 2021/22 Accounts with the aim of achieving a draft Statement of Accounts by late May / early June.

Work continues to be undertaken on supporting the LGR process with various work packages having a financial impact in addition to those concentrating solely on the Financial Services functions.

The Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23 was approved by the Audit Committee on 23rd March.

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
- **COVID-19:** The team has continued to support staff and Managers with Covid needs including supporting communications through updated FAQs and guidance documents
- **Returning to the Civic Centre:** The team has been actively supporting the Civic Centre to once again become the main place of work taking account of Government guidance. Rates of return to work in the office had been steadily increasing however this has been impacted by the recent increase in infection rates. We anticipate the transition back to the Civic will continue to increase as the infection rate drops
- **Kickstart:** Two Kickstart employees joined the team in November to help create some capacity to support the iTrent implementation and a Data Retention Project. The Kickstart's will be employed for a six-month period and the programme is being accessed via Cumbria Chamber. The Kickstart's are over four months into their contract and are contributing well, particularly in relation to data retention activity

- **Special Severance Payments Guidance Consultation:** Consultation closed on 13th August 2021. We await the Government's response to the consultation which will inform the approach for both Carlisle City Council and the new Cumbrian authorities. There is no update on this at the current time

ICT UPDATE

- Work on the Revs & Bens services move to Hosted eClaim and Forms for Carlisle, Copeland and Allerdale is now complete and live
- Presented the ICT workload and priorities to SMT and highlighted areas that we can engage with third parties to provide services, focusing on security as a priority. Working with third parties for costs which have been passed to Finance
- Windows 10 upgrade to 20H2 – rollout to Windows 1909 (interim step) now complete on end user laptops and rollout of 20H2 now commencing
- 2008 servers – IKen (Legal System) upgrade now completed and live. Civica Lalpac (Licensing) migration to new servers has started with Test System now in place. System will go live at the end of April
- LGR – regular meetings are scheduled and work processing to establish requirements

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

The Elections Team are busy preparing for the Cumberland Council election on 5th May. Nominations close on 5th April at 4.00 p.m. and the venues are all booked and confirmed and staff appointed.

Carlisle City Council also has a by-election in Longtown & the Border Ward, which will be held on 5th May also. The counts for both Elections will be held at 10.00p.m. on 5th May in the Civic Centre.

LEGAL SERVICES

Key agreements have been completed to allow Cumbria University to draw down Borderlands funding to begin the new development at the Citadels and move to a key first stage in the Council's involvement in assisting with the site assembly work to deliver the scheme.

Earlier this year, Lawyers dealt with a licensing appeal following revocation of an animal breeding licence. A prosecution ensued on animal welfare charges and breaches of licence. The defendant received a suspended sentence, was banned from owning or controlling animals and was ordered to pay our costs. Those costs have now been paid. Also in court, lawyers have dealt with a number of prosecutions for littering, failing to microchip dogs, fly tipping and failing to attend PACE interviews. We also work closely with the Police and internal teams on antisocial behaviour matters and enforcement.

We have had seven applications to hold street parties for the Queen's Jubilee so far but expect more following the publication of information on our website.