

Report to Council

Agenda
Item

10(v)

Meeting Date: 3rd November 2020

Public/Private*: Public

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

FINANCIAL SERVICES

The budget process has begun and reports will be considered by Executive and Scrutiny in November and December for setting the 2021/22 budget. It is still anticipated that the Comprehensive Spending Review and Local Government Finance Settlement will still be announced prior to the end of the year.

Returns are still being submitted to MHCLG for COVID related costs and claims are being made for the losses of sales fees and charges income in line with the Government's compensation scheme.

HR AND PAYROLL

- Since the last report the Team's focus has continued to deal with the impact of Covid – and the changing advice to encourage people to work from home again. As at 1st October, 77 employees categorised as vulnerable/shielding have been reviewed by Occupational Health. We continue to assist with communications, FAQs, guidance and reporting to relevant Government Departments as well as internally to SMT. Twice monthly updates via Microsoft Teams with North West Employers continues and the catch-up meetings with the Trade Unions have moved to a monthly rather than fortnightly basis
- End of October will see work starting on developments of the I-Trent system – specifically for recruitment and logging of time worked
- The Member led Task And Finish Group is due to meet again on 4th November with a revised draft Improving Attendance policy

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

OD continue to deliver the virtual training for Managers as part of the Management Competency Standards Training, excellent feedback. A report on Managers completion

of training has been sent to Directors and Service Managers to ensure ongoing commitment.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

- Recent counts for information requests (From 18 August 2020– 9 October 2020):
- Environmental Information Regulations requests received - 10
- Environmental Information Regulations requests responded to - 12
- Freedom of Information Act requests received – 105
- Freedom of Information Act requests responded to - 106
- Data Protection Act requests received – 4
- Data Protection Act requests responded to – 4

ICT UPDATE

New Head of Digital and Technology has been appointed and due to start with us on 16th November, her name is Laura Griffiths and she is currently the IT Manager at Harrogate Borough Council.

The upgrade to the Council's firewall has been completed.

The annual ICT health check for PSN compliance has been complicated.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

The Elections Team are well into the annual canvass, with 6,000 properties still to respond to the household correspondence issued. For obvious reasons regarding Coronavirus, the personal canvass will be in the form of telephone/emails this year, rather than door knocking. This decision was made by Jason Gooding, Chief Executive and we intend to put out social media posts and advertise the need to respond to the forms to ensure everyone who is entitled to be registered, is on the electoral roll. The new register will be published on 1st December 2020.

We are already in the process of planning for the Elections in 2021, which will be City Council, County Council, Police & Crime Commissioner and possible Parishes. These plans will be challenging in the current circumstances, as the safety of the public and our staff is paramount. We are due to contact staff and polling stations to check availability and are speaking to our Health & Safety Team to put measures in place.