

PORTFOLIO:

GOVERNANCE & RESOURCES

Report of
Portfolio Holder:

**COUNCILLOR JOHN
MALLINSON**

GOVERNANCE

Legal Services

Legal Services continue to provide specialist advice and support to other directorates and Members. In addition, and as part of the Ethical Governance programme, legal and financial officers have provided training for Members on the following topics:

- Planning; Licensing; Code of Conduct; Mayoral Induction; New Member induction; Role of the Audit Committee (including Statement of Accounts and Treasury Management)

Training sessions have also been provided to other Council officers on issues such as Procurement and PACE.

Licensing

The 4th year of the Carlisle & Eden Best Bar None Scheme was launched in January 2011. Trained assessors from the Police, Environmental Health and Licensing visited the applicant's premises and carried out in depth inspections. Areas covered include procedures, policies and staff training in relation the four licensing objectives: crime and disorder, public safety, public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

The Award Ceremony was held at the Crown & Mitre Hotel, Carlisle on 24th May in front of invited guests which included the Mayor of Carlisle and Chief Executive. Accredited premises and category winners were presented with their awards at the ceremony which was hosted by Robbie Dee of CFM Radio. Various fund raising activities took place during the evening which resulted in over £1,000 being collected for the CFM 'Cash for Kids appeal'.

The Carlisle winners were:

Best Pub – Crown Inn, Stanwix

Best Bar – Bar Solo

Best Club – Outrageous

Overall Joint winners of the Best Bar None Award 2011 were – Outrageous and Crown Inn, Stanwix.

RESOURCES

Financial Services

2010/11 Final Accounts Process

The 2010/11 outturn reports have now been considered by the Executive and the Resources Overview & Scrutiny Panel and are considered elsewhere on this Council agenda for formal approval. The Executive formally recommend that Council approve carry forwards totalling £1.8m for revenue and £1.2m for capital.

Work on the 2010/11 IFRS based Statement of Accounts continued through May and June and the draft accounts (subject to Audit) were signed off by the Assistant Director of Resources at the end of June prior to being scrutinised by the Audit Committee on 5th July. The external audit process started in early July and this 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 27th 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 2012/13 onwards are currently being reviewed and updated. Draft plans will be considered by the Executive at the end of July before being considered by Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel in August. Council will formally consider the new plans at its meeting on 13th September.

Audit Services

Outturn Report 2010/11

The Outturn report for 2010/11 was presented to the Audit Committee on 5th July 2011. It was reported that the 2010/11 Audit Plan was substantially completed, in particular:

- 538 direct audit days were delivered against a Plan of 519 days
- All high priority material audits were completed by the year end.
- High risk audits which have been started were not fully completed at year end have been given priority for completion in early 2011/12.

- Uncompleted work relates to low risk areas which, by their nature, are given lower priority for completion in year.

In terms of the Adequacy of Internal Control during 2010-11, it was reported that the Authority's system of internal control is operating satisfactorily.

The review of the Effectiveness of Audit Services 2010/11 concluded that Audit Services has delivered an effective service in 2010/11. Reference was made to a number of improvements to audit practices which were introduced in 2010/1, along side other improvements planned in 2011/12. It was also noted that the position and role of internal audit will be strengthened and the service will be more resilient as a result of the new Audit Shared Service arrangement

2011/12 Audit Plan Progress – Quarter 1

Audit work in the first quarter period has concentrated on 3 main areas:

- The completion of work brought forward from 2011/12.
- Audit reviews started on 5 high risk audit areas
- Work to address data matches raised by the National Fraud Initiative is also ongoing. The outcome of this exercise will be reported later in 2011/12.

Property and Facilities

Asset Review Disposal Programme

An officer Working Group, chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, is co-ordinating the implementation of the property disposal programme which was approved by Council in January.

The project aims, through a period of rationalisation and consolidation, to create a portfolio which is based on fewer assets and is easier and less expensive to manage. Through reinvestment of capital receipts, and the release of embedded value, the portfolio will improve performance with the delivery of better yields and more rental income.

The first phase of disposals has been completed. Six assets have been sold realising in excess £800,000, which is slightly ahead of target projections. Sales have been conducted through a mixture of private treaty transactions and public auctions. Officers are now working on bringing the next tranche of properties to the market, which importantly includes our asset at Morton.

Following a competitive tender process Montagu Evans have been appointed to bring the superstore and District Centre site to the market in August. They will be advising the Council on operator / developer selection, the delivery route and mechanism, and negotiating transactional terms on behalf of the Council. Discussions are also underway to sell Willowholme Industrial Estate to a consortium of sitting tenants.

Accommodation Review

The aim of this project is to review our own accommodation to ensure the space we use matches our needs and is operating efficiently and cost effectively.

The project will deliver corporate standards for the space we occupy, optimise usage and increase capacity. It will reduce wasted space; identify savings and the potential to generate additional income or capital receipts.

The next phase of the project involving back office accommodation at the Civic Centre and Bousteads Grassing has now been completed. Most of the Economic Development staff have moved from floor 7 to 6. This has created space on floor 7 for Community Engagement staff to move from the ground floor which in turn means the Car Parking staff (including Wardens) can now move to the Civic from Bousteads in early July.

Bousteads Grassing is now manned by a few operational staff who remain at this location. The roadside office building which is now empty and has been decommissioned, it is due to be demolished in the first weekend of August. Tenders for the demolition, which went out on the 27th June are due back on the 8th July, and a planning application seeking consent for the demolition has been submitted.

The completion of the expansion of the Customer Contact Centre, with the provision of additional desking and interview rooms, has provided the Council with scope to accommodate the Passport Office who are keen to relocate from Kingmoor Park. Negotiations on the terms and conditions for the licensing arrangements are currently in hand, with a start timetabled for the end of July which should generate additional for the Council.

Councillor J Mallinson
Governance & Resources Portfolio Holder