

Full Council Meeting – 7 February 2023

Portfolio Holder Report for Communications and Corporate Resources – Cllr Benet Allen

CORPORATE SERVICES

Please find below the relevant updates relating to each of the Corporate Teams providing the main support functions to the council.

HR Team Update

- Due to the switch in HR systems data for the period is incomplete. The Team have been facilitating the switch to SAP and training has been held in early January to assist this.
- The team continue to be heavily involved in Unitary work and continuing to deliver to the directorates.

Organisational Development & Learning Update

- Supporting with Tier 2/3 recruitment and onboarding.
- 50 managers completed the Leadership Development Programme during the first part of the year with impressive feedback. Evaluation report is available.
- Significant improvement in percentage completion of mandatory corporate e-learning modules.
- Successful migration to new e-learning platform ahead of LGR.
- On-going organisation training request process.

ICT Team Update

- Primary focus of ICT has been supporting the various LGR sub-workstreams, especially the move to a single platform.
- This is a complex and substantial piece of work, and the team will all be required to assist during the cut over weekend from the 19th January.

Governance Team Update

- Work continues to balance the pressures of staff retention (against LGR and SCC opportunities), continued commitment to supporting the committee cycle, LGR workstreams and working towards the implementation phase of the CGR project.
- The Elections Team are preparing for the Taunton Town Council elections in May 2023, which will include the introduction of voter identification at polling stations.
- Recruitment for the new Taunton Town Council clerk has been undertaken in the period.

Change & Digital Team Update

Single Platform Cut Over

- SWT has moved across to the Somerset Council IT environment over the weekend of Thursday 19th to 8am Monday 23rd. This required a full IT outage to

enable user accounts, devices and data to be migrated. A project team was set up and worked closely with the LGR programme and IT Teams to ensure a smooth transition for staff and Members.

- This has included multiple briefings, communications, checklists, Q&A's and working to build a core group of Business Change Champions to help establish the services in the days following the cut-over.

Information Management Team Update

- Training held to update staff on the incoming sensitivity labelling that will be in place following the switch to the Somerset Council Microsoft environment.

Business Analyst Team Update

- The BA team have been busy working on numerous Unitary projects including mapping around benefits and revenues.
- Support has also been provided to the cut-over project, specifically associated with the shared mailboxes that exist within the council.

Health & Safety Team Update

- The work to complete the Health & Safety Improvement programme continues with most workstreams nearing an end. The follow up Audit from SWAP indicated vast improvements in all areas and we will review closing the programme in due course.
- Assure Health & Safety System – we are close to releasing the final module of the system with a noticeable increase in the reporting providing the teams with valuable opportunities to improve safety.
- We continue to work alongside SCC and district partners to develop the SC H&S sub workstream products.

Business Intelligence Team update

- Q2/ performance report taken to Executive and Scrutiny, and Q3 performance report written.
- Ongoing work to support a number of LGR workstreams including Corporate Performance, Business Intelligence, PMO and Risk Management.
- Developed new user-friendly risk management tool.
- Ongoing support to Taunton Town Council development.
- Continue to support LGR process especially regarding
 - the work to produce a single gazetteer and address record (Local Land and Property Gazetteer) for the whole of Somerset.
 - the BI requirements for the new Dynamics finance system

We also have one of the original Internal Operations programmes sitting within the team, Service Improvement & Efficiency, within which the key project still running is:

Customer Experience Improvement Project:

- Sophie Morvany presented the early deliverables of the project to SMT.
- This project improves customer experience and efficiency by reducing the number of avoidable contacts thanks to better customer channelling. The website 'contact us' page has been re-designed to promote and ease self-service and reduce the number of unnecessary requests coming through calls or general enquiries.
- Early data is showing a 12% hit increase in customers moving past the 'Contact Us' page, intimating that they have found the service required and can utilise online forms.

- Early signs show a reduced volume of calls being received which again is a positive trend representative of numerous marginal changes delivered through the project (alongside improvements delivered by the housing directorate).

FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT

Our teams continue to focus on delivering our 'business as usual' services for Somerset West and Taunton as well as undertaking significant work progressing the implementation of the new unitary authority in April. Activities are progressing well with staff working tirelessly to maintain service delivery.

The good news is that we remain on track with our procurement activities, and our financial position remains under control with good performance against budget and a healthy reserves position. Ultimately our performance for the financial year will be reported after the year end to the new Somerset Council but we will receive the Quarter 3 updates on the February/March committee cycle giving a good indication of the overall picture.

There will be some key aspects related to the closedown of SWT that we will need to ensure are completed before 1 April, and I encourage Members' support in areas such as the "related parties" returns we need to provide each year. With SWT dissolving on 31 March these will need to be completed by then.

CUSTOMER

The key focus for the Customer AD area has been on preparations for a smooth transition into the new council on 1 Apr 2023 and in maintaining business as usual service delivery.

Good progress is being made with preparations for the transition to the new council, but there is still a significant amount of work to do. There are no significant business as usual issues, but we are continuing to maintain a close focus on customer call volumes and response times during a busy time of the year.