



AGENDA ITEM:

SUMMARY

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	5th November 2013
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Performance Report Quarter 2 – Legal Governance, Democratic Services and People
Contact:	<p>Cllr Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services (in respect of Legal Governance and People) Cllr Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council (in respect of Democratic Services)</p> <p>Author/Responsible Officers:</p> <p>Steven Baker, Assistant Director (Chief Executive's Unit)</p> <p>Mark Brookes, Group Manager (Legal Governance) Jim Doyle, Group Manager (Democratic Services) Matt Rawdon, Group Manager (People)</p>
Purpose of report:	To provide Members with the performance report for quarter 2 in respect to Legal Governance, Democratic Services and People.
Recommendations	That Members note the report.
Corporate objectives:	Resources and Value For Money; Optimise Resources and Implement Best Practice.
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> None.
'Value For Money Implications'	<u>Value for Money</u> Monitoring Performance supports the Council in achieving

	Value for Money for its citizens.
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment completed for each service area as part of service planning and reviewed quarterly.
Equalities Implications	Equality Impact Assessment completed for each service area as part of service planning and reviewed quarterly.
Health And Safety Implications	None
Consultees:	Cllr Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services
Background papers:	Annex 1 : Quarter 2 Performance Report Annex 2: Quarter 2 Updated Operational Risk Register

1. Members will find attached to this report the Corvu performance data for Legal Governance, Democratic Services and People, together with the Operational Risk Register, in relation to the second quarter of 2013/14. Generally speaking the data does not reveal any major issues for concern. Set out below is some additional information about the performance of these services during quarter 2 which may be of particular interest to the Members of the Committee. The officers named in the contact box above will be present at the meeting to answer any questions that Members of the Committee may have.

2. PEOPLE GROUP

This report includes the performance information relating to those services which make up the new People Group i.e. Human Resources, Communications & Consultation and Community Partnerships. The Group Manager (People) reports to the Assistant Director (Chief Executive's Unit). Matt Rawdon was appointed as the Group Manager in August.

Human Resources (HR)

Corporate projects – HR Support

- 2.1 Human Resources continue to be heavily involved in many of the Council's critical projects. In particular, significant support is being provided in relation to the strategic procurement of Housing Maintenance (now referred to as the Total Asset Management contract), Customer Service Unit (CSU) Transfer, Dacorum Anywhere Programme, Electronic Document Records Management System (EDRMS) and the Decant project (which involves the relocation of Council staff from the Civic Centre to 39-41 Marlowes. A significant amount of time was spent in compiling the staff information and facilitating the consultation process as part of the CSU transfer to Northgate.

New Recruitment Website

- 2.2 On the 10th September, HR launched a new online Recruitment website, which sits within the Council's website. There are a number of advantages in

this new system. Individuals wishing to apply for a vacancy will find the system much quicker and easier to use. Once individuals have registered on the system they will be able to apply for multiple roles, with a single application. They will also have the ability to adjust their application form to fit other roles, but they will only need to complete their personal details once. This will reduce time and avoid unnecessary duplication.

- 2.3 The majority of communication with candidates will be by email, if this is suitable for them. While there will initially be the ability for candidates to complete a paper copy of the application form, we will be encouraging online applications whenever possible. All adverts, whether on our website or in local publications and newspapers, will refer candidates to the Council's website where they will be able to access the full details of the role. The new website will save time as communications can be sent out electronically to a number of candidates with one click.

Apprenticeship Scheme 2013/14.

- 2.4 The Council in September agreed the recommendation from Cabinet to implement a new apprenticeship scheme which will see apprentices employed by the Council and local businesses being able to apply for grants to assist them in employing apprentices.

Online Medical checks for new Starters

- 2.5 Working in partnership with Serco (our providers), medical checks have been moved from paper copy to online. This has reduced the amount of time it takes to medically clear an applicant from 1 week to two days.

HR Team Leader appointment

- 2.6 Anne Stunell has been appointed and commenced her new role on 21st October. Anne has been working for the Council for nine years and her last role was HR Lead Officer.

3. Communications & Consultation

Corporate projects – Communications Support

- 3.1 The communications team continue to support the Council's critical projects, in particular, the Decant project, Dacorum Anywhere, Hemel Evolution, and Behavioural Change.

Value for Money Campaign

- 3.2 This is a two year programme that promotes messages on the cost of services for residents.

Evidence Based Decision Making

- 3.3 A Project Initiation Document has been developed and approved by CMT. The objective of this project is that the Council will have developed the capacity to use internal and external data and evidence collectively to inform decision-making for service delivery and be better placed to assess the impact of its decisions.

Staff Survey

- 3.4 The next Staff Survey will soon be finalised and will be launched to staff on 11th November. Managers and trade unions have been consulted over the questions asked.

Social Media

- 3.5 Communications has recently implemented a social media management system called Crowd Control HQ which will put our Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube accounts into one system. Some of the key benefits will be-

- Keep accounts safe and secure by protecting passwords
- Save time by scheduling posts
- Automatically remove defamatory posts (even if they are posted out of hours)
- Measure and report what is happening on Twitter and Facebook
- Follow online discussions by searching the internet for key words.

4. Community Partnerships

Strategic Voluntary Sector Partners

- 4.1 New funding agreements have been drafted for the 10 core voluntary sector strategic partners and strategic partner mid-term interviews are currently being held.

Local Strategic Partnership (formerly known as Destination Dacorum)

- 4.2 There has been a recent review of the Local Strategic Partnership and the group agreed a fresh approach for the future. It was decided that it would operate as a senior networking group which would meet quarterly to discuss specific challenges/issues that face the locality. This would involve the engagement of all sectors, including the Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group.

Voluntary Sector Organisations

- 4.3 Grant aid was distributed to small community and voluntary sector organisations via the internal grant process

Sportspace

- 4.4 We are working with Sportspace to understand their outcomes in the community. It is anticipated that in the future these outcomes will be jointly agreed and will target community groups.

5. Organisation Development and Training

E-Learning

- 5.1 The new E-learning Platform, DORIS, (Dacorum Online Resources for Interactive Study) was launched at the end of September. Most mandatory courses are available for staff to access and in time there will be a larger choice. This new platform allows us to re-use thousands of other courses that other organisations have developed. There will still be a need for 'class room' training, but in time this will reduce to a more blended approach with E-Learning. This also supports the Council's objectives in relation to the Dacorum Anywhere Programme.

Health and Safety

- 5.2 All Divisional Team Meetings throughout the year will now include health & safety on the agenda and a Health & Safety Risk Analysis, with any associated mitigating actions, will be entered onto CorVu by Group Managers.

6. LEGAL GOVERNANCE

- 6.1 Legal Governance continues to be heavily involved in many of the Council's critical projects. In particular, significant legal support is being provided in relation to the Public Service Quarter project, the strategic procurement of Housing Maintenance (now referred to as the Total Asset Management contract), and the Council's New Build Housing project.
- 6.2 Key developments in relation to the above projects during the last quarter include:
- The completion of the contract for Gas Servicing with Sun Realm.
 - Progress on key development documents for the PSQ project, including heads of terms for the PSQ development procurement and a development agreement with Hertfordshire County Council.
 - The completion of a building contract for the New Build project at Farm Place, Berkhamsted.
- 6.3 The increase in the number of Right to Buy transactions has continued into 2013/14 with 24 Right to Buy sales in the second quarter.
- 6.4 The legal team frequently represent the Council in the courts and tribunals, leading on injunctions, prosecutions and defending employment tribunal cases and obtained 2 anti-social behaviour injunctions during the last quarter.

Licensing

- 6.5 The licensing team are currently consulting on a new sex establishment policy which will update the current policy, but also bring in proposed areas within the borough where it will be suggested that no sexual entertainment venues will be appropriate.
- 6.6 The licensing team have also been consulting on a proposed increase in taxi fares, which was suggested by the trade. This will be reported to the Licensing Committee for final approval at the end of October. Further consultations are also taking place on the introduction of a basic communication test, a new on-line knowledge test, a practical driving test and the introduction of minimum age vehicle limits for newly licensed vehicles.

- 6.7 The enforcement section of the licensing team are currently investigating a number of drivers who are operating within the borough without a licence and have revoked one driver's licence for alleged dishonesty offences which are currently being investigated by the Police.

7. DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Member Support

- 7.1 During Quarter 2, Member Support managed and organised the following:

- Published 23 agendas
- Completed 23 sets of minutes
- Spent 36 hours at evening meetings
- Processed 29 public speakers at Committee
- Processed 11 Portfolio Holder Decisions

Member Development

- 7.2 Three training sessions for members were provided during the second quarter and 44 councillors attended courses on Planning, Dacorum Anywhere and Public Speaking. The Public Speaking course was a joint authority training course and was attended by 13 councillors from other authorities.
- 7.3 The target set for Member training in 2013/14 is for each Councillor to attend at least three training sessions. Following the second quarter, member attendance is averaging 1.39 sessions per councillor, but training will step up over the winter months. There are four courses scheduled for the next four weeks and then the budget cycle begins, so the target is expected to be achieved.
- 7.4 Work is currently under way with Human Resources to provide, internally, Personal Development Plans for all Members early in 2014. Options are currently being considered and all members will be encouraged to take part.

Independent Remuneration Panel

- 7.5 Under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances)(England) Regulations 2003, the Council is required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. The purpose of the Panel is to review the existing Scheme of Allowances and make recommendations to the Council on the appropriate level of payments to be made in the future. The IRP met in September and carried out the review, which included the views of members garnered from a questionnaire on the Members Allowance Scheme and those members who spoke to the panel. The answers have been analysed and form part of the IRP report which will be presented first to this Committee and then Cabinet in January 2014.

Electoral Services – the Annual Canvass

- 7.6 The Annual Canvass of electors for the Electoral Register 2013 began in early October. As in previous years, electors were given various means of registering their details, such as paper reply with postage paid, the internet, Freephone or text.

- 7.7 The registration form allows electors to opt out from having their details appearing in the 'edited' version of the electoral register. This is the version of the register which can be purchased by members of the public, and is often purchased by commercial companies for marketing purposes. Electors can opt out by ticking the appropriate box on the form.
- 7.8 In previous years the Council, along with most other councils in the country, issued forms with a pre-printed tick in the 'opt-out' box to those electors who had previously ticked the box. However, this year 192.com issued a legal challenge against those councils who 'pre-tick' on the grounds that this was in breach of the legislation which requires the actual registration form issued by councils to be substantially the same as the form prescribed in Regulations. In their opinion, 'pre-ticking' substantially changes the effect of the form and is therefore illegal.
- 7.9 After consultation, the Electoral Commission also advised councils that the form should give the elector the option to opt-in or opt-out on an annual basis. Although some councils chose to ignore this advice, this Council's Monitoring Officer advised that 'pre-ticking' would risk having the whole canvass declared illegal and void.
- 7.10 The Monitoring Officer advised that this was too great a risk and that we should cease the practice of pre-ticking for the 2013 canvass in return for 192.com's agreement that, should their court action be successful, this Council would not be liable for any legal costs. Some other councils have also adopted this course of action, although others have decided to continue pre-ticking and defend the court action.
- 7.11 Unfortunately, due to an omission on the part of the Council's contractors, Electoral Reform Services (ERS), those electors who replied using the internet and Freephone options were not given the opportunity to 'opt-in' or 'opt-out' of the 'edited' register. Anyone who registered by internet or Freephone between the process going live on Friday 11 October and 9.30am on Monday 13 October, when the mistake was corrected, had to be contacted by ERS and asked to repeat the process.
- 7.12 ERS immediately accepted full responsibility for the mistake and acted swiftly to rectify the error by contacting the 7,500 electors affected. Electors who responded online were contacted by e-mail. Those that did not leave an email address, or registered by Freephone, received a letter apologising for the inconvenience caused and requesting that they re-submit their registration. At the time of writing, there is no evidence that this mistake has affected the number of electors registering to vote.

Town & Parish / Communities

- 7.13 Responsibility for supporting the Town and Parish Councils has now transferred to Democratic Services from the Partnerships Team. Sharon Collins (the Town, Parish and VCS Officer) is now located in the Member Support Team and will continue to provide support to the Community and Neighbourhood Centres in Hemel Hempstead and the voluntary sector, as well as the Town and Parish Councils. This includes-
- Organising the Town & Parish Council Conference in November
 - Carrying out 10 review meetings with Strategic Partners

- Organising two training sessions on roles & responsibilities of trustees and committee members
- Providing specific support to a particular Community Association

8. Operational Risk Register

- 8.1 The operational risk register relating to the services covered by this report shows no changes to the risk scores since the last quarter. Members should note that the risk owner in respect of CE_M01, CE_R04 and CE_R06 will become David Austin (Assistant Director – Neighbourhood Delivery) who is now responsible for Regulatory Services.