



AGENDA ITEM:

SUMMARY

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	12th June 2018
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Quarter 4 Performance Report – Legal Governance and Democratic Services
Contact:	Cllr Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Corporate Services Author/Responsible Officers: Mark Brookes (Solicitor to the Council) Jim Doyle, Group Manager (Democratic Services)
Purpose of report:	To provide Members with the performance report for quarter four in relation to Legal Governance and Democratic Services.
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 Corporate Services
Background papers:	Annex 1: Quarter 4 Performance Report Annex 2: Quarter 4 Operational Risk Register

- Members will find attached to this report the Corvu performance data for Legal Governance and Democratic Services, together with the Operational Risk Register, in relation to quarter 4 of 2017/18.
- Members will also note that the only Operational Risk which falls within this area is CE_R01 Failure to deliver successful elections.

LEGAL GOVERNANCE

The Legal Team

- The Legal team frequently represent the Council in the courts and tribunals, leading on injunctions, prosecutions and defending employment tribunal cases and judicial review proceedings. In the last quarter the Legal team presented the following cases in court:-

Matter	Client/type	Tasks
Pitblado	Planning (prosecution)	This matter concerns a breach of Planning Enforcement Notice. Matter listed for trial on 16.03.18 at the Stevenage Magistrates Court. Defendants found guilty and was ordered to pay the following: Costs £1,290 VS £129 Legal Cost £21,680
(DBC v Ryan Bailey ASBO/Trespass	Anti-social Behaviour	Appeal against Closure order – matter listed at the Luton Crown Court on 22.03.18 – Defendants withdraw their Appeal on the day of the Appeal.
Maguma	ASBO/Trespass	Trial/committal hearing for breach of Injunction court order – found guilty - but no action taken.

Housing Dibble	Housing - possession	Dibble – possession for rent arrears and Hearing: Tuesday 20th Feb 12:30 at Watford County Court – Possession granted. Costs £325
Pollard	Possession proceeding	Possession to be given 29 th of March 2018 cost £855
Griffiths and Webb	Possession proceeding	Possession forthwith and costs £855
DBC McKenzie	ASB Injunction order	Injunction obtained plus costs £808.00
DBC Haider Ali	Licensing prosecution	Trial – found guilty 6 points on the licence Victim surcharge of £30 £1,120 costs
DBC v Puddethatt	Prosecution fly tipping	Successful prosecution: £350 fine £35 victim surcharge £812 costs

4. The team have been active completing a number of planning and conveyancing transactions bringing significant income into the Council. In the last quarter there were over 80 new instructions actioned which were a mixture of new leases, licences, contracts, right to buys, and S.106 planning agreements.
5. The Solicitor to the Council was the lead lawyer working on the completion of the Leisure Contract with Sports and Leisure Management Limited. The contract completed on 29th March in time for the service to commence on 1st April.
6. The Information Security Team Leader has been working on A project to ensure that the Council is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) for the go-live date of 25th May. This has included drafting new policies and procedures and training all relevant staff and councillors.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

7. In general the early part of 2018 has been 'business as usual.' There has however been some staff movement and the whole group has been getting

used to the new staffing arrangements, while the ongoing restructuring continues apace.

Elections/Electoral Registration

8. The early part of Quarter 4 was taken up with the refresh of Absent Vote identifiers (mainly signatures).

As far as the Register of Electors is concerned Monthly Rolling Registration has been as follows;

January-total amendments: 2350
Additions: 309
Amendments: 133
Deletions: 1908

February-total amendments: 1865
Additions: 1409
Amendments: 52
Deletions: 404

March- total amendments: 1196
Additions: 786
Amendments: 112
Deletions: 298

Quarter totals
Additions: 2504
Amendments: 297
Deletions: 2610

9. **Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan Referendum**

A referendum was organised in Grovehill and held on the 15th of February 2018 to ask residents if they want the council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Grovehill future to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area.

The total number of votes received was 852, which was a 15.36% turnout.

10. **Northchurch Borough and Parish elections**

Elections were held in the Northchurch Ward on 8 March 2018 to elect a Borough and a Parish Councillor.

The Borough turnout was 40.5%
The parish turnout was 39.88%

11. **Staffing**

Electoral Services is currently going through some staff changes. An Apprentice is due to start in June. This will be a great addition for the team and they will also work towards a Level 3 in Business and Administration.

We are looking to also recruit an Assistant Electoral Registration Officer, due to a staff member leaving.

12. Member Support Services

During Quarter 4, in addition to helping to organise the election and Referendum, Member Support carried out the following:

- Published 35 agenda
- Completed 32 sets of minutes
- Spent 37.17 hours at evening meetings
- Processed 33 public speakers at Committee
- Published 9 Portfolio Holder Decisions
- Published 10 Officer Decisions

13. Town & Parish Liaison

During the quarter the following were supported

- 10 Community Association Meetings
- 6 Mayors Civic Reception Meetings
- 2 High Sheriff Meetings
- Organised and Chaired - 1 Town & Parish Clerk Meeting and 1 Centre Managers Meeting
- 2 Mayors visits – 1 to Bovingdon Parish Council 1 to the Mount Prison
- Organised for GDPR training for Town & Parish Councils and Community Associations
- Organised training for updating websites for Community Associations

14. Mayoral Support

As well as the usual day to day support, assisting the Mayor, the team held two raffles raising over £500 for the Mayor's Charity and organised a civic reception that was cancelled due to inclement weather and then quickly re-scheduled four weeks later as the Mayor's Civic Dinner.