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Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Quarter 1 Performance Report – Legal and Democratic Services
Date:	6 th September 2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Graeme Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Quarter 1 Performance Report
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	<p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Building strong and vibrant communities</p> <p>Ensuring economic growth and prosperity</p> <p>Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need</p> <p>Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery</p>
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	Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	All
Purpose of the report:	To provide Members with the performance report for quarter four in relation to Corporate and Contracted Services.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	That Members note the report.
Period for post policy/project review:	Quarterly

1. Members will find enclosed with the report the Inphase performance data for Legal and Democratic Services, which are under the sections headed Legal and Corporate Services.
2. The only Operational Risk which falls within this area is CE_R01 Failure to deliver successful elections and there have been no changes to this risk during the second quarter.
3. The services included in this report are those services which in Quarter 1 came under the Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic Services), which are Legal, Licensing and Corporate Support (which includes the combined teams of Members Support, Electoral Registration and Corporate Support). Members will note that in Q1 2022/23 the Procurement and Contracted Services Team moved into the new Commercial Strategy and Delivery Portfolio led by Councillor Andrew Williams and the remaining services moved under the Corporate Services Portfolio led by Councillor Graeme Elliott.

The Legal Team

4. 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	Case Detail
Fly-tipping prosecution	DBC -V- Ismail Parllaku	11 th May 2022 - Fine £1120.00, victim surcharge £112 and costs £867.23 Total:- £2099.23

Fly-tipping prosecution	DBC-v-Selvin Matthew	11 th May 2022 - Fine £2000, victim surcharge £190 and costs £938.03 Total:- £3,128.03
Fly-tipping prosecution	DBC-v-Baby Joseph	11 th May 2022 - Fine £258, victim surcharge £34 and costs £938.02 Total:- £1,230.02
Fly-tipping prosecution	DBC-v-Khawaja Wani	11 th May 2022 - Fine £1000, victim surcharge £100 and costs £744.44 Total:- £1,844.44
Fly-tipping prosecution	DBC-v- Martin Nevin	Warrant of arrest issued
Fly-tipping prosecution	DBC-v-Caroline Nevin	Warrant of arrest issued

In addition to the above, 89 cases were issued under the Single Justice Procedure.

The Licensing Team

5. Key updates for the team are as follows:

- The Licensing Team have had a busy month with several Animal Licence Applications and Animal Inspections being dealt with each Inspection takes up at least 4 hours of an officers time. The Applications also demand several hours of post-inspection completion.
- There are also two current Investigations taking place in respect of unlicensed dog boarders and dog breeders.
- Enforcement Officers have been dealing with several incidents relating to taxi licensing, which will be considered by the Licensing Committee on the 1st September 2022 to answer if they are fit and proper persons to hold their respective licenses. This enquiry alone as taken up many hours of Investigations and PACE Interviews.
- Investigation Officers have been dealing with holders of Pavement licenses who have either failed to renew the licence and refusing to pay the £100 fee or traders who refuse to apply for a licence enforcement is continuing. I can report that most of the people concerned have now agreed to pay the fee for renewal or apply for new licenses this in part due to the visits made by the Enforcement and Compliance Officers.
- There is also an ongoing situation with a Licensed Premises that is not conforming to Licensing Regulations this is being dealt with by the Licensing

Team, Hertfordshire Police Licensing Officers and Dacorum Planning Department.

- Also it is time for the annual inspection of Licensed Static Caravan Parks within the Dacorum Borough. The last Inspection was several years ago and a new policy document will be put forward to the Licensing Committee to incorporate new legislation. As we have several sites this will involve each officer making several visits to all sites to make sure they are compliant.
- Finally the day to day applications and enquiries keep coming in and this is keeping all Officers busy there are more and more FOI mainly for Animal and Taxi Licensing. These are answered and returned within the 28 day period.

Corporate and Democratic Support

6. During Quarter 1, Corporate and Democratic Support carried out the following:-

- Delivered Annual Council and Mayor Making
- Supported 17 committees (including agendas & minutes)
- Supported 14 corporate meetings (including Portfolio Holder updates)
- Processed 13 Portfolio Holder Decisions
- Processed 4 Officer Decisions
- Delivered 6 Member Development sessions;
 - 21st April – Mandatory Training - Planning
 - 5th May - Member Briefing – Planning Enforcement & Heritage (also open to Parish Councils)
 - 17th May - Member Briefing – CIL
 - 16th June - New Code of Conduct for Members
 - 21st June - Member Briefing – Private Sector Housing
 - 29th June - Member Briefing – Joint Strategic Plan
- Administered the Corporate Complaints System, carrying out assessment, processing, summarising and allocation of;
 - 117 Stage 1 complaints
 - 14 Stage 2 complaints
 - 200 Service Requests

Mayoralty

During Q1, the term of Mayor for Cllr Stewart Riddick came to an end and at the Annual Council and Mayor Making ceremony Cllr John Birnie became Mayor of Dacorum for 2022/23, with Cllr Alan Johnson as his Deputy. Cllr Birnie announced Dacorum Community Trust as his chosen charity.

The Mayoralty launched a new fundraising initiative, a sweet stall, with the team and the charity attending the following events;

- Queens Platinum Jubilee Party in Gadebridge Park – raising £477.48
- Armed Forces Day in Gadebridge Park – raising £371.83
- Queens Baton Relay in Gadebridge Park (fundraising total tbc)
- The Mayoralty received a total of £523.75 in donations for the charity

- The Mayor also hosted a flag raising ceremony for 'Fly a Flag for Armed Forces Day'
- The Mayor attended 27 engagements, both within Borough supporting local community & business events and at events hosted by Mayors & Chairs across Hertfordshire
- The Deputy Mayor attended 7 engagements on behalf of the Mayor

Digital Print & Post Room

During Qtr 1 the team;

- Processed and franked a total of 93,228 outgoing mail items, at a total cost of £46,980.98 (includes HVCCG & CAB which is recharged)
- Processed and banked 697 cheques with a total income of £232,396.91
- Received and banked 15 emergency cash transactions with a total value of £14,089.15
- Arranged confidential waste collections of;
 - The Forum 792kg
 - Cupid Green 194kg

Electoral Services

7. During Quarter 1, the following changes were made to the Electoral Register:-

Additions 1058

Deletions 610

Changes 199

Movers 279

In addition to registration, the following audits were carried out:

- A review of 18,000 postal voters was completed, to ensure that all information required has been captured correctly and maintained
- 1000 invitation to register forms sent for 17 year olds, as provided on the attainers list from HCC.
- Work has begun to cleanse the register and deleting expired ITR's. This is where an elector asked to register, the relevant form was sent to them and a reminder but they have not completed it. If it is still required, this will be picked up during annual canvass.
- Whilst carrying out all of the above mentioned manual checks, it has been highlighted that there are many electors who are marked as being over 76 yrs. (excluded from jury service), which are not. This back dates to their registration prior to IER when they could tick the box to be excluded from jury service. There were 8100 records which were manually checked and adjustments made to those records which were inaccurate.
- A large number of duplicate applications/emails/phone calls were received from electors questioning the May elections, or not as the case was for DBC.

Communications had been sent out via social media highlighting DBC did not have any elections.

Staff Training

Throughout this quarter the team attended the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) Eastern Region administrator's group meetings, where updates were received from the Electoral Commission, the AEA and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The Elections Bill was discussed in length and immediate implications highlighted.

An elections webinar was attended to gain an overview of issues/resolutions raised by authorities holding May 2021 elections.

Two team members attended the count at St Albans Council which provided an insight into how others carry out certain processes and proved very beneficial.

Staffing

Due to staff sickness, the team were short 1 full time member of staff for this quarter.

The team continue to have a vacancy for an Electoral Services Lead Officer. This is currently being re-advertised with a closing date of 10 July 2022.

Update as of Aug 2022 – this post has been filled from within the team and therefore the recruitment process will shortly begin to back fill the Assistant post.

Annual Canvass 2022

Preparations have started for the annual canvass 2022. The project plan, risk assessment and timetable have been produced and all relevant dates communicated and agreed with the printers, Call Centre and post room.

The National data match has been booked in for the 5th of August and all local data matching will be carried out the following week.

Hemel Hempstead BID ballot

Work has begun to assist with the Hemel BID ballot due in November 2022 and this will progress over the summer. Initial meetings have been held and timescales set out.