



www.dacorum.gov.uk

Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

| | |
|--|---|
| Report for: | Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee |
| Title of report: | Quarter 2 Performance Report – Legal and Democratic Services |
| Date: | 1 st November 2022 |
| Report on behalf of: | Councillor Graeme Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services |
| Part: | I |
| If Part II, reason: | N/A |
| Appendices: | Quarter 2 Performance Report |
| Background papers: | None |
| Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report: | |

Report Author / Responsible Officer

Mark Brookes, Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic Services)



Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228236 (ext. 2236)

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 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> |
|-----------------------------|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| | Climate and ecological emergency |
| Wards affected | All |
| Purpose of the report: | To provide Members with the performance report for quarter two in relation to Legal and Democratic Services |
| Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s): | That Members note the report. |
| Period for post policy/project review: | Quarterly |

- Members will find enclosed with the report the Inphase performance data for Legal and Democratic Services. A number of indicators which were previously in this report have been removed to management only as they were consistently at 100% and are therefore now reported to the Assistant Director (Legal and Democratic Services) for performance monitoring only. The indicator for Freedom of Information requests will be reinstated to this report for next quarter.
- 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.
- The services included in this report are those services which fall 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).

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 | Case Detail |
|------------------------|--------------------|--|
| PSPO Breach (spitting) | DBC -V- Cornwall | Fine £107, victim surcharge £34 and costs £185.55 Total:- £326.55 |
| Littering prosecution | DBC-v-Gomm | - Fine £40 (littering) £60 (Obstruction), victim surcharge £34 and costs £185.55 |

| | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---|
| | | Total:- £319.55 |
| Fly-tipping offence | DBC-v- Nevin | Fine £480, victim surcharge £48 and costs £599.47 Total:- £1127.47 |
| Fly-tipping prosecution | DBC-v- Martin Nevin | Fine £320, victim surcharge £34, costs £599.47 |

The Licensing Team

5. Updates as follows

- Animal Licensing has seen several new applications to register business for boarding kennels and breeding licenses. There are also three possible enforcement investigations on going in respect of breaches of regulations by licence holders and unlicensed animal boarders.
- The team have one officer, Phil Nolan who has almost completed his 12 month course to enable him to complete Animal Licensing reports and enforcement he has undertaken this course in addition to his normal enforcement work.
- September has also seen all pavement licenses renewed and several new licenses applied for. There have also been several objections to these licenses from members of the public and Departments within the Council. This has resulted in at least one pavement licence being refused due to ongoing issues.
- Officers are also engaged in the daily issue of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licenses being renewed and new Licenses being issued, also taken place are random inspections of vehicles and drivers within the Dacorum area.
- September is also a busy time for Caravan sites within the area most of which will have to see their regulations and conditions updated this is an ongoing procedure involving the visiting of all sites and issuing invoices for the coming year.

Corporate and Democratic Support

6. Despite summer recess taking place for the duration of August, during Quarter 2, Corporate and Democratic Support carried out the following:-

- Delivered 2 Full Council meetings, which were live streamed via YouTube
- Supported 21 committees (including agendas & minutes)

- Supported 6 corporate meetings (including Portfolio Holder updates)
- Supported 3 appeals hearings
- Processed 15 Portfolio Holder Decisions
- Processed 4 Officer Decisions

- 2 Member Development sessions that were due to take place had to be re-scheduled to take place in Qtr 2 were deferred;
 - 21st July – Domestic Abuse Policy (moved to October)
 - 13th September – Cultural Awareness Training (to be rescheduled)

- Administered the Corporate Complaints System, carrying out assessment, processing, summarising and allocation of;
 - 131 Stage 1 complaints
 - 8 Stage 2 complaints
 - 275 Service Requests

Mayoralty

During Q2, we marked the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the service supported the delivery of activities to commemorate and remember Her Majesty, as well as delivering a ceremony to deliver the proclamation of King Charles III.

Dates were agreed with Pendley Manor to host the 2023 Mayors Civic Reception. Plans are also underway to hold the Mayor's 2023 Civic Service.

The Mayor attended 18 engagements, both within Borough supporting local community & business events and at events hosted by Mayors & Chairs across Hertfordshire

The Deputy Mayor attended 4 engagements on behalf of the Mayor

Digital Print & Post Room

During Qtr 2 the team;

- Processed and franked a total of 73,170 outgoing mail items, at a total cost of £37,082 (includes HVCCG & CAB which is recharged)
- Processed and banked 609 cheques with a total income of £140,171.90
- Received and banked 19 emergency cash transactions with a total value of £15,080.28

Electoral Services

7. During Quarter 2, the following changes were made to the Electoral Register:-

Additions 944

Deletions 1142

Changes 179

Movers 1061

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

- Manual checks on the over 76 markers have been completed with 5000 electors records checked and updated accordingly.
- Checking all overseas electors have completed some form of absent voting and emailing all of those that haven't persuading them to do so with a link to the electoral commission proxy and postal vote applications

Staff Training

Throughout Q2, a variety of individual and team training and networking took place, including:

- Attending boundary maintenance review training provided by Xpress, the ERS software provider.
- Attending two Eastern Branch Meeting regarding the upcoming elections in May 2023 and received updates from the Electoral Commission, DLUHC and the Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA)
- A member of the team provided some internal training of CSU staff ahead of the annual canvass. To date 4 staff have been trained. The CSU have also been offered the opportunity for refresher training on Electoral Services in general.
- The Team Leader attended the AEA & DLUHC Seminar on the Elections Act. A very informative day explaining the aspects of the Act coming into effect in 2023 (Accessibility of Polls and Voter ID)
- The team took part in the Electoral Services Technology discussions, which looked at the systems and processes in place and how they can link to others within the council. In additions the team recorded the volume of calls received to see if there's any further work to be done with the support provided by the CSU.

Staffing

The Electoral Services Lead Officer vacancy was successfully filled and an existing team member was the successful candidate. This therefore created a full time Electoral Services Officer vacancy within the team. The recruitment process has progressed and the advert will be published in due course.

Annual Canvass 2022

Annual Canvass begun in Q2 by the completion of all annual canvass preparations, production of the risk register and project plan and all register checks. The National Data Matching exercise was completed on the 5th of August, and all Local Data matching was completed by the 8th of August.

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. Route 1 properties were then sent the Canvass Communication A (CCA) on the

22nd of August 2022 and Route 2 properties were issued with the Canvass Communication B (CCB) form on the 24th of August 2022.

During September, 9296 reminder canvass forms were sent to all non-responding route 2 properties.

The canvass is running to plan and all forms received are being processed accordingly.

The team are now preparing for the door knock canvass stage, which will start at the end of October. All canvassers have been appointed and the training for them prepared.

Elections 2023

Election preparation have begun ahead of the May 2023 polls, a whole team meeting along with Members support took place in July 2022 to discuss all aspects of the elections and tasks to be undertaken. A full audit of the election stores also took place to check stock of all equipment required. The team have begun work on the staffing database, contacting a portion of staff on various aspects in order to cleanse the staffing database further ahead of next year's polls. This has included requesting election staff's proof of their right to work in the UK and asking all existing Poll Clerks if they would be interested in taking on the Presiding Officer role.

The Elections Project board had its first meeting, which was an introduction to the elections in 2023, the new requirements of the Elections Act and had a look through the project plan.

The team debated processes and suggested ways of working, many of which will be incorporated into the planning and delivery stages.

Notification was received with regards to the Boys Brigade HQ being unavailable for the elections in 2023. Therefore work has begun to consult on an alternative polling station.

Hemel Hempstead BID ballot

Work begun to assist with the Hemel Hempstead BID ballot due in November 2022, all project meetings have taken place to ensure the smooth running and successful collaborative working that is required.

All key dates have been agreed with the printers and the election timetable produced.

Kings Langley Neighbourhood Planning Referendum

Work begun around assisting with the Kings Langley Neighbourhood Plan Referendum proposed for later this year. Planning is in the final stages and the election timetable will soon be implemented.