

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 December 2022
Subject: Internal Resource Portfolio
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Sam Kane

Recommending:

That the report of the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder be noted

People Team

People Strategy 2020 – 2022

Engagement and Wellbeing project

- The results of our recent ‘Creating our Tomorrow – our ways of working for the future and beyond’ survey have now been shared with all employees and featured in the recent employee briefing on 20th October 2022. A video has been produced and is available on the intranet for all employees to refer to - for information regarding the results of the survey. We continue to encourage our managers to engage with their team members about the hybrid approach, whilst checking in on employee’s wellbeing and understanding the benefits of employees having flexibility in their roles.

Upgraded employee intranet

- Work is progressing on upgrading our existing employee intranet site. The existing site and the new will run alongside one another for a period of time whilst feedback is received, and tweaks are made to refine the site to a point where we are able to close down the outdated one.

On 10 October, 50 employees received access to the site to provide comments. So far, the feedback received has been positive and we have received lots of recommendations for refinements and tweaks which are being worked on behind the scenes.

The intranet site will be launched to the whole organisation in a test environment on 27 October and both intranet sites will run for a period of time whilst adjustments are being made from the feedback received.

Business Support

Local Land Charges (LLC), HMLR Project

- The Council’s data has passed all of HMLR’s checks through their artificial intelligence tools. Recently their Data Quality Team carried out a manual sample check of our data, where some additional records that require correction were discovered, so HMLR are manually working through those and making corrections on our behalf. This has left our

employees to focus on reducing the backlog of conveyancing searches and except for a couple of complex sites, the turnaround time is back at 10 working days.

- The Service Manager - Business Support continues to work with the Team Manager, our Continuous Improvement Officer, and our Change Manager to review what the remaining service will look like post migration.

Projects

Accommodation – Commercialisation of our bookable spaces

- The Council are partnering with IWG and Epping Regus for the advertising and booking management of our Conference Suite and Council Chamber at the Civic Offices. Epping Regus have engaged their Solicitor to go through a final review of the contract and we are hoping that both parties will sign shortly.

Soft Facilities Management – Outsourcing our Concierge Service

- Officers formally went out to tender to outsource the Civic Offices Concierge Service. Four companies showed an interest and attended the Civic Offices for a site visit, which led to one company making a bid for the contract. The bid went through an evaluation panel and the outcome was that it was a strong and tailored bid.
- A report is going to December Cabinet recommending the outsourcing of the service and the appointment of the successful provider. Prior to Cabinet, the report will go to Stronger Council in November for scrutiny.

Contingency Planning

- Officers are currently reviewing the Council's corporate Business Continuity Plan, ensuring there are plans in place if power is disrupted.

Democratic and Election Services

- A joint session with the Elections Team at Broxbourne Borough Council was held in November to consider the requirements of the Elections Act 2022. The main changes made by the Act for 2023 are;
 - i. Voters will have to show Photo ID at Polling Stations before a ballot paper can be issued.
 - ii. Electoral Registration Officers will have to issue free voter identification documents to those voters without a valid form of photo identification
 - iii. The handling of postal votes will be restricted:
 - This includes the number that can be handed in by any one individual
 - iv. Returning Officers must take reasonable steps to support those with a disability at polling stations
- Changes from 2024 include:
 - i. Postal Votes will now only last for a maximum of 3 years.
 - ii. Limits on the number of people a person may act as proxy for.
 - iii. The voting & candidacy arrangements for EU voters will change.
 - iv. All British Citizens living overseas will be able to register for UK Parliamentary elections, no matter how long ago they left the UK.
- The main benefits of the changes are to protect voters from electoral fraud and provide additional support for voters with disabilities at polling stations
- Members should be reassured that Officers are taking advice from a range of sources and working with other authorities to understand the requirements and how to implement them.

- Officers will provide updates for the Members Bulletin and they are considering a communication plan to provide the public, members and Town/Parish clerks of the changes as soon as is practicable.
- A Member Scrutiny Training Workshop took place on 13-Oct-22. This was well attended, well received, and will be repeated in future municipal years.