

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 1 November 2018

**Subject:** Technology and Support Services

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor A. Lion

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Technology and Support Services Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **Support Services**

The latest issue of, District Lines published a report on the second Managers' Conference at the end of September, attended by 80 officers. Derek Macnab introduced the newly appointed Strategic Director, Georgina Blakemore and the new Leadership Team. Derek was also pleased to announce that Gavin Handford has been appointed as the second new Strategic Director and is due to start in December. Derek went to setting out the latest financial position and progress on the People Strategy.

Georgina and Leadership Team have been working intensively in the run up to the conference on the key messages and drivers for change. The key challenges are to find budget savings target of £2.5million over next three years. Managers were encouraged to work with their teams, unlocking motivation and instilling the same passion in their teams to take us forward as our new Leadership Team is displaying. Managers will be concentrating on building the services around:

- Customer - building our services around the people we serve
- Efficiency - making the very best of our people, time and money
- Effectiveness - an agile, flexible workforce achieving our ambitions working together and in partnership

The Managers' Conference was followed by two all staff briefings.

The new Corporate Training Programme, focusing on leading, managing and coping with change for staff and managers, has received a great response. Change brings uncertainty to those involved. As a caring employer, staff well-being remains one of our top priorities. We are piloting counselling sessions to support staff who have been dealing with particularly difficult cases or circumstances, providing a safe and supportive environment where our people can discuss their feelings and emotions with someone who is an impartial and qualified counsellor.

Hays recruitment visited on 17 October to promote 'My Career Portal' to support career development. The session provided staff with an informal demonstration of the online portal and answered any questions on planning their career. The portal can be accessed at any time and on any internet device. It is a good opportunity to identify training requirements and planning career progression.

Several Members attended the 'drop-in' i-Trent training session, ahead of the Council meeting on 25 September. Additional training can be provided, if there is a demand, i-Trent will be included in the new Members training programme.

Online annual leave recording and authorising is now "live" for all staff. Managers are currently receiving training on how to record employee sickness absence, with a "go live" date of the 1 November 2018. Officers are building other modules on the i-Trent system, including Recruitment, Learning and Development with a proposed 'go live' date of April 2019.

## **Facilities**

Roofing works are now complete at the museum in Waltham Abbey, and chimney stacks have been overhauled. External redecoration has now commenced.

The ongoing project to refurbish the nine passenger lifts at the Limes Farm estate continues to progress well. Three lifts have now been completed, the fourth is underway and work on the fifth lift is due to commence in mid-October.

The refurbishment of Homefield House in the grounds of the Civic Offices is now complete and is in use for meetings and training. 'Hot desking' office accommodation is available for staff use.

A planning application has been submitted for works to convert Building 21 at Townmead Depot into accommodation for the Nursery Service. The decision is due in early November. Preparation work, which is not subject to planning permission has been carried out.

To enable better control of heating and hot water systems in the sheltered housing units (SHUs) by providing remote access to the controls from the Facilities Management office. This has been achieved by linking the Trend building management system between the (SHUs) and the Civic Offices.

The TagEvac emergency evacuation system has been installed at the Civic Offices site. This allows more efficient logging of checked evacuation areas in the event of an emergency evacuation of the building. This has been tested on two occasions in early October and found to operate effectively.

The design and installation of a new High Voltage Substation at North Weald Airfield is under way. This helps facilitate the planned expansion of the airfield's commercial tenancies.

External decoration work has been completed to fences and garage doors at the rear of Pyrles Lane shops in Loughton and will shortly be commencing to Landlord's areas at Oakwood Hill Industrial Estate. Both these jobs are being carried out by the Council's in-house Works Unit.

Preparations are being made to replace aging external lighting at two Council owned rows of shops (with flats above), Borders Lane in Loughton and Market Square in Waltham Abbey. New energy efficient LED lamps will be used to increase energy efficiency and improve reliability.

The Facilities department has now been amalgamated with housing repairs under the new organisation.

## **Legal**

Evidence gathered by the Council's Environment and Neighbourhood team led to a prosecution in Chelmsford Magistrates Court on 13 September 2018 against Mr. Vadims

Tjokuskins of Hillyfields, Loughton, Essex who pleaded guilty to the offence of transferring household waste to an unauthorised person and which was then fly tipped in Oakley Court.

Mr. Tjokuskins admitted to the handing over of the waste (a quantity of cardboard boxes) without checking to ensure that the person taking the waste was an authorised person. The waste was of a type that would have been collected by the Council as part of its regular collections had it been left out for collection in the correct way.

The Magistrates stated that it was a negligent act and Mr. Tjokuskins was ordered to pay a fine of £600. He was also ordered to pay the Council's prosecution costs of £900 together with a Victim Surcharge £60. The Magistrates stated that had he not pleaded guilty the fine would have been £900.

## **Technology**

### **Technology Strategy Update**

In early October 106 out of 335 scheduled projects are complete (31.64%), a further 124 projects are currently due for completion over the next 12 months. This is slightly behind schedule, due to projects being reprioritised owing to delays in the Accommodation Review and external suppliers.

### **Laptop Rollout**

ICT have completed half of the rollout of laptops, this is slightly behind schedule due to some delivery issues, but to remedy this additional resource has been allocated to the project by diverting staff from other less critical work. Full completion of the rollout is planned for late November.

### **ICT Systems**

The Councils Document Management System (DMS) for Information@Work, has been upgraded to the latest version, this will give additional capabilities, including allowing the system to be used in a browser. This also begins the process of migrating from a desktop to browser-based environment, providing benefits of being able to access via mobile devices, with responsive screen size.

The upgrade work for the main servers was completed over weekend of the 6-7 October, as planned by ICT Business Analysts and Northgate. The ICT Business Analysts also carried out an upgrade and testing to the scan stations (desk top scanners). The system was operational and available for staff use on the Monday morning as planned, the disruptive elements of this critically important upgrade were completed out of hours. The live upgrade was the culmination of months of testing and planning by ICT Business Analysts working with colleagues in the Service areas and our supplier. Completion of this upgrade also allows us to progress the equally important Assure upgrade to the Northgate Planning and Environmental systems.

### **SharePoint**

SharePoint will enable Members and staff to view a new vibrant and informative intranet and share documents with colleagues if required.

Work continues with the implementation of SharePoint and testing on how we can securely share documents externally. Our external partner, working with one of our ICT Business Analysts, has delivered the prototype corporate intranet to us, and we are on schedule for go-live of that before Christmas.

## **Office 365**

Additional staff have been migrated onto Office 365, and the training continues to progress well. The combination of e-learning and coaching seems to be the correct mix for our users, but the current slow rollout is designed to allow us to tailor the training correctly ahead of the rollout speeding up.

## **Spatial Information Team (Gazetteer & Street Naming and Numbering)**

Work has begun analysing the capabilities of the Capita Academy system with a view to linking the addresses for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates to the corporate gazetteer. As well as delivering more accurate addressing, once linked there is potential for us to discover properties and business not paying appropriate rates through cross referencing against other matched council systems. This will enable us to have accurate information and challenge any irregularities to ensure that Council Tax and Business Rates are collected on time and improving the Councils overall objectives in the Corporate Plan of recovering any outstanding debts.

Work on enhancing property classifications to meet the recent changes to statutory indicators if a property is detached or semi-detached etc., is progressing well. From over 9,000 properties that require analysis and classification the team have already completed over 4,000.

We have had some implementation issues with the new Street Naming and Numbering system, but these have now been overcome, testing is in progress and the delayed pilot will start soon.

Where possible we always try to encourage development naming with local significance. An example of the collaborative nature of our street naming and numbering process has allowed us through liaison with North Weald Parish Council, the developer and the family, to commemorate Lt. General Wilhelm Mohr by naming a major development in North Weald "Wilhelm Mohr Court". This is in recognition of the 75 years association with the Norwegian Airforce and in particular Lt. General Wilhelm Mohr.

## **Spatial Information Team (GIS)**

We are exploring mobile working options for the grounds maintenance team, with a pilot for our Basic Tree Maintenance program due to start imminently. This is following successful testing, and migration of all their mapping requirements into ESRI, our corporate GIS solution.

We have been re-developing and now gone live with the waste management mobile working KPI reporting solution. This system enables the Biffa team to report issues during their rounds and sync with the Councils database, by enhancing improvements with updates, this ensures that we meet their changing requirements. We will then be looking at a solution for street cleansing inspections and random sampling of waste collections. The Waste Management Team will also begin trialling our mobile working solutions which integrates ESRI with their M3 back office system. This system is already live for the Neighbourhoods team and is also being tested by the Engineering, Drainage and Water team. Officers will be able to feed live updates from site to colleagues in the office and share key information to resolve issues there and then, working smarter, efficient and putting our customers at the heart of our business needs.

Recently the Digital Innovation Zone project team held a workshop and along with attending the GIS team arranged for our GIS supplier ESRI to give a talk outlining some potential uses for big data and internet of things.

At short notice and with tight deadlines, the GIS section were able to provide Forward Planning with a survey solution for completing town centre surveys as part of the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) which is a document used to assess indicators set out in the Local Plan. The GIS team are constantly seeking ways to add value, across a number of the key customer facing service areas, to improve productivity corporately across the Council.

### **Digital Forms Team**

Our Cautionary Contact process is about to be piloted following successful testing and sign off by the Corporate Safety Officer. This will simplify and self-manage the entire process, whilst providing officer security. The Cautionary Contacts is an online system that has been developed by the Council to provide information to its staff and contractors, particularly lone workers, as the Council has a duty ensure their health and safety. Staff will be able to access the most recent information, before they entire a building to ensure their safety always.

Redevelopment of the Councils complaints process is now complete and is undergoing testing, before being piloted.

Process management solutions including mobile working are under development for Housing Repairs.

Alongside these major process designs, the team are currently at various stages of development of around 30 online forms and processes, and as analysis of requirements for the new website continues more new requirements are likely over the coming weeks.

### **Superfast Broadband High-Speed Internet**

The new Phase 4a Superfast Essex broadband project remains in the planning stage. Once plans are finalised, Economic Development Officers will look to bring the contractors, Gigaclear, into a project 'kick-off' meeting with key Council departments to ensure the impact of the plans are fully understood and the interests of the Council and its residents and businesses are properly considered. This £3.1million contract with Gigaclear will bring full fibre ultrafast speeds to a further 2,100 homes and businesses in Epping Forest District by December 2019. Making Epping Forest District one of the best connected in Essex.

Work to promote the work of and raise the profile of the Essex and Herts Digital Innovation Zone (DIZ) continues with numerous engagement events undertaken. In particular, the work of the project team exploring digital opportunities to improve information flow to ambulance crews in emergency situations has been presented to health partners on the Urgent Care Local Delivery Board and the STP Clinical Expert Oversight Group and discussions are taking place to explore the potential for local pilot projects. Presentations on the DIZ have also been given to LSCC, the Harlow Enterprise Zone Board and Superfast Essex Steering Board.