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REPORT TITLE:	**Discharge of Roles and Responsibilities since the last meeting of the Council**
REPORT AUTHOR:	**Councillor Silvia Dacre**
AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY:	**Resources**
DATE:	**9 February 2022**

ICT infrastructure

The ICT Infrastructure teams continue to be extremely busy responding to the challenges that the new ways of working have presented us with. We continue to support 1400 concurrent staff working from home. We are working with CAFM (Corporate Asset & Facilities Management) colleagues on the PAS (People, Assets and Systems) project as we re-configure buildings and workspaces for the new ways of working.

Cyber risks are ever present, and part of our resilience is ongoing awareness to the risks and how to mitigate those risks. This not only includes technical measures but also training for staff and elected members. We have implemented a new Cyber Security Training package for staff and elected members. This is based on training material provided by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC). We have packaged this up onto our own virtual training platform. All staff who were at work and elected members completed the training by the set deadline. Those staff who were not at work will complete the training when they return to work.

We continue to implement our offline backup solution. This is a Cloud based backup which cannot be changed once it is created. This gives protection from cyber-attacks that seek to incapacitate backups and the ability to restore data and systems from backups.

Our key line of business systems are developed in-house. These systems include Council Tax, Business Rates, Benefits, Financials and Social Care. The IT

infrastructure, upon which these systems run, is currently being replaced. The new infrastructure is more resilient; part of it is hosted at Kirklees data centre. Work has now started on migrating systems to the new platform. Migration is now complete, and we are working on decommissioning the old infrastructure platform.

We have received our annual IT Health Check (ITHC) report. The ITHC aims to provide assurance that all external and internal systems are protected from unauthorised access or change. We have completed a project document to identify additional work that needs to be completed as a result of what was reported.

We have now rolled out Microsoft Office 365 (O365) to all staff and elected members. We have 2,435 licensed users. We have now fully decommissioned our legacy on-premises Exchange email system.

We have started looking at a new remote working connectivity solution as part of the PAS project. This solution will meet our needs for the future by having a greater capacity and higher level of resilience. Delivery of the new solution has been delayed due to the worldwide semi-conductor supply shortage.

The Service Desk and Field Support teams has been very busy supporting staff and 80 schools in Calderdale as well as a few schools outside of Calderdale. The demand on the IT Service Desk remains high as does the requests for new devices.

The Field Support team have been supporting the PAS project. They have been working closely with CAFM colleagues on the new desk layouts in key buildings. We have taken delivery of 600 new computer monitors (screens) for the new desk layouts in Princess Buildings. These new monitors have now been installed. We are now working on the desk refit of Halifax Customer First. They have also been helping to get buildings ready for disposal by removing old redundant IT equipment. We now have a significant amount of redundant IT equipment which we will need to arrange disposal of.

The new ways of working have continued to result in a significant reduction in printing. Not only does this save money on the cost of printing but it has a positive impact on the environment.

SUB-TITLE Digital transformation & Strategy

Activity is now predominantly business as usual, with reduced response to the pandemic, but we are well prepared to support as we have should we be called upon.

Work continues with a new Digital Calderdale presence. Whilst the proposal is not yet complete, there is already progress in some of proposed key workstreams, with work being undertaken to link directly into the Inclusive Recovery Plan workstreams.

- *Connectivity*
    - o The £20 million CityFibre Gigabit Investment will see spades in the ground at the end of February with an All-Member briefing in February to update Members on ongoing consultation.
    - o CityFibre engaging with anchor organisation on improved Full fibre/5G connectivity in the Town Centre, including Network Rail on the New Halifax Station, The Piece Hall, and Leeds Beckett University Business Centre.
    - o Delays due to chip shortages on the fixed wireless broadband (BDUK (Building Digital UK) Contract 3)) for some of our hard-to-reach rural areas have been resolved with rollout now active again and planned through to end of contract delivery in June 2022.

- *Digital Inclusion*
    - o Securing and delivery of 150 mobile devices and data contracts for digitally excluded citizens. Organisations receiving devices include, Calderdale College, Women's Centre, St Augustine's, Young Persons Housing, Halifax Opportunities Trust, Public Health Early Years.
    - o Working with Lloyds Banking Group on a partnership approach with St Augustine's Centre, on developing a Connectivity Hubs could support those that are digitally disadvantaged refugees.

Our Digital Council theme slides nicely into how Digital Transformation will be supporting the future operating model of the organisation as a lead in the Systems element of the PAS (People, Assets and Systems) strategy to ensure that the workforce have the systems and technology available to them to be able to deliver their service roles in a collaborative agile manner wherever they me be located, and that digital is part of their service DNA, ensuring they design service delivery with a focus on the customer.

- Working with HR/OD on their system review, in readiness for contract end/procurement.

Digital Transformation Software Development teams continue support the key lines of business systems and continue to collaborate with services and partners to swiftly

deliver amendments to our systems to support business and citizens during the pandemic.

A summary of system developments in in the last period are as follows:

- Benefits System
    - o Increased automation of processes relating to Claimants on Universal Credit.
    - o Changes made to facilitate the removal of the temporary Covid Universal Credit Uplift.

- Business Rates System
    - o BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) System development
        - One-off programs for changes in instalment dates and marking accounts for write-off.
        - Work to manage retrospective move-ins.
    - o Production of data extracts for accounts in receipt of Retail Reliefs, accounts reaching various Debt Recovery Stages, and total payments made in respect of the Covid ARG (Additional Restrictions Grant) Grants.
    - o Work ongoing for the new COVID 'CARF (COVID 19 Additional Relief Fund)' Business Rates Relief.
    - o Implemented new online application process for Covid 'Omicron' Grants.

- Council Tax System
    - o Implemented changes around investigation and correction of data around Void Property Liable Units.
    - o Changes made to amend data send to Enforcement Agents.

- Adult Social Care – CIS System
    - o Changes made to improve recording of statistics around Home Care Brokerage.
    - o Changes made to fix issue around Stages 2, 3 and 4 of Safeguarding
    - o Work ongoing on creation of new online Safeguarding Referral Forms.

- Children's Social Care – CASS System
    - o Improvements to Foster carers module including Reg 24 referrals and carer statuses.
    - o Amendments to Care Leavers reporting
    - o Improvements to caseload reports including enhanced data fields and accuracy

o Improvements to the CLA (Children Looked After) Episodes report to enhance information

- Financials System
  o Changes made to stop Direct Debit Schedules running in between Christmas and New Year.
  o Testing of ATLAS PDP (Professional Development Programme) Files relating to recovery of debts arising from Benefits Overpayments from the DWP (Department for Works and Pensions) (Department for Works and Pensions) following an upgrade to the DWP system.

The Systems Integration team continue to support a range of services in digital improvements aimed at improved customer experience:

- Integration of Gov Notify Text Messaging to be used to provide status updates and service disruptions
- Virtual Assistant Upgrade function will enable chats via WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and can integrate with web forms
- Redevelopment of the online noise reporting form

All these successes come from strong collaboration across Council Services using successful transformation methodologies and agile development principles.

SUB-TITLE Performance management, transformation, and business intelligence

Since the last report to full Council, our Transformation team continue to work closely with colleagues in our Adults Social Care teams on their transformation programme to identify areas of process improvement for customer enquiries and incoming email workflows. We are supporting our Environmental Health/Customer Services Teams with the next phases of customer reporting/process improvement work for the online reporting of locality-based faults (gully defects) and complaints (noise).

Our performance and business intelligence colleagues have completed the data collection and performance analysis for the Half Year to date as part of the newly refreshed corporate performance framework and its associated SKPI's. This was reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny in December 2021/January 2022 in line with cyclical reporting schedules.

SUB-TITLE Finance

The Finance team has been busy over recent weeks supporting the budget process and which resulted in a number of reports on the council tax base, business rate pool, an update on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the capital strategy being presented to Cabinet on 17 January in preparation for the decision on the Council's budget and council tax for 2022/23 at the Budget Council meeting on 28 February. Other teams within Finance are also preparing for that date with the council tax and business rates billing processes.

At the same time the Finance services is supporting and advising on major projects or developments which are coming before Council and working with colleagues in other areas such as Business and Skills to ensure that processes were implemented as quickly as possible to provide the newest round of business grants to local businesses. Members will be aware that the application process for the new grants are now in place and Finance staff will be processing and paying these applications alongside other support payments to individuals in need.

Based on the announcement by the Chancellor last week we will also need to develop processes for paying the council tax 'rebates' of £150 for band A-D properties and a discretionary scheme for properties in bands E-H once the Government guidance has been issued.

The Business Support staff within Finance also continue to support front-line services during these challenging times.

SUB-TITLE Legal and Democratic services

As you would expect work is already well underway to prepare for the May elections with contingency planning in place to allow for a count venue other than at Northbridge Leisure Centre. Further details will be provided to Members dependant on decisions to be taken at the Council meeting itself.

Significant planning is also underway in connection with the celebrations for the Platinum Jubilee with the lighting of the beacon on Beacon Hill being at the heart of that on Thursday 2nd June. Again, more details will be provided in due course.

My thanks to the Committee Admin team for the hard work and commitment shown in dealing with the varied ways we have had to hold meetings over the past few months. Whilst we are not yet in a position to return fully to pre-pandemic arrangements they will continue to ensure the processes and procedures are there to allow us to deliver the democratic functions vital to the Borough.

SUB-TITLE HR&OD

Our priority over the coming months within HR & OD is to work with directorates/services on their workforce development plans. We have had a considerable number of staff deciding to resign and take Early Retirement. To ensure we do not lose significant skills and experience we are working with services to address their workforce planning alongside their service plans, working with the commercialisation team on Visioning Days. This enables directors and senior managers to think about the service they deliver, to check it is strategically aligned to the Council's priorities. HR&OD are working with a number of services e.g., Planning, IT, Finance and Legal to address their planning and specifically their recruitment and retention issues.

These plans are linked to our future workforce modelling to ensure we have the right people, right skills, in the right roles that will deliver future council services to meet with our vision and priorities.

We are working with our Comms team on a new and exciting recruitment campaign with many of our staff being filmed to talk about their chosen career path and their experience of working for Calderdale as an employer.

We are about to review a cohort of HR policies, including the Trade Union Facilities Agreement policy.

We are currently in the process of aligning our own HR&OD business plans to ensure that we are delivering the services the Council and Directorates require to enable them to deliver their key priorities and services.

Occupational Health are currently working on delivering our own in-house staff health surveillance programme which will generate significant savings for Public Services. We are about to advertise for an OH Technician to support the OH Manager to be able to deliver this function in the Summer.

The Health & Safety team are currently devising a H&S support plan for our young people about to leave school and take up their first paid employment opportunity or venture in to further education, away from home. This will be a significant piece of work rolled out to schools and academies to ensure young people are aware of the safety culture they should expect in their chosen career path or educational setting. This offer will also incorporate our marketing around apprenticeships for our Calderdale students.

Recruitment and Resourcing have secured significant traded services income in the last 9 months by promoting our services to external providers including schools and academies outside the borough. We are in the process of recruiting an apprentice to generate further income opportunities. Work is intensifying on our Spring recruitment campaign to attract more apprentices, graduate, and interns.

We are increasing our number of apprentice and entry level positions and working with managers to review the essential qualification criteria that can create barriers to employment.

We are also looking at new ways to engage with communities to increase our applicant pools, with a diverse recruitment panel to ensure an inclusive workplace and better representation from under-represented cohorts.