

## **Cabinet Member for Resources Overview and Scrutiny Briefing – 27<sup>th</sup> July 2009**

### **Human Resources and Organisational Development**

Revised employment procedures for capability, discipline, and grievance were agreed at General Purposes committee and have been implemented. Managers have been trained on the new procedures which aim to provide a more timely process, whilst retaining the elements that make for fair proceedings.

Sickness absence in the Council was 8.80 days on average per employee in May 2009. This is a slight reduction against the year end for 2008/9 of 8.88 days. In overall terms the trend remains downward and good progress has been made in comparison with the sickness rate of May 2008 which was 9.4 days lost on average per employee.

### **Audit and Risk Management**

Key elements of the service:

- Internal audit
- Insurance
- Risk Management

Recent key events:

- Decision against London Authorities Mutual Limited (LAML) by the Court of Appeal on 9 June 2009, declaring LAML illegal and all insurance contracts void.
- Submission of the Annual Internal Audit Report and Assurance Statement to the Audit Committee

The key challenge for the Audit service is taking action post LAML.

- Following implementation short term insurance cover for 2009/10, the arrangements for how the service is delivered in the future need to be determined

### **Benefits and Local Taxation**

Key elements of the service

- Bill, collect and recover Council Tax (CT) and National and Non-domestic Rates(NNDR)
- Provide a comprehensive Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Benefit (CTB) claims service for the local residential, business community and other key stakeholders

Recent key events, issues and future challenges:

### **Benefits Take up**

- A working in partnership with the Pension Service to maximise take up of all under claimed benefits in the borough has been successful and is continuing in 2009/2010. This has identified a massive £1.4M of unclaimed benefits over a year to Haringey residents
- We will be running a campaign 'Get in Touch – Not in Debt' to encourage payment of council tax. This promotion will advise residents not to ignore their Council Tax Bill and to contact the Council as soon as they experience financial difficulties.

### **Corporate Finance**

This service provides the financial support to the Council.

Key events, issues and challenges:

- Financial planning for the next 3 years has commenced, in particular preparation for the 2010/11 budget setting process.
- Much intensive work has been undertaken on the Use of Resources element of Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) with workshops being held with the external auditors.

### **Corporate Property Services**

Key elements of the Service:

Corporate Property Services (CPS) is to advise the Council on the effective use of property resources.

Recent key events, issues and future challenges are:

#### **Recent key events:**

- A condition Survey Programme is due to commence in the next quarter to assess the condition of Council Owned Properties, this will provide a comprehensive appraisal of all.
- Continue to implement **energy efficiency** measures in key buildings to reduce the Council's CO2 emissions through a range of technology controls.
- Deliver the **Accommodation Strategy**, in particular by supporting the SMART Working Programme as it is introduced in Alexandra House.
- Support the delivery of the council's key regeneration schemes where the council holds land.

Two particular challenges over the next few months will be:

- **Generating Capital Receipts from Property Disposals** - The current economic climate and the decline in the property market have impacted on the Council's ability to gain a good rate for disposal of buildings and therefore each situation is being re-appraised.
- Addressing budget pressure relating to rental income from the commercial property.

## **CORPORATE PROCUREMENT UNIT**

Key elements of the service

- Construction Procurement
- Supplies & Services Procurement
- Accounts Payable
- Energy & Sustainability

### **Recent Key Events, issues and future challenges**

All Council buildings and the majority of schools now have the obligatory Display Energy (Efficiency) Certificates (DECs) in place to comply with legislation. Each building over 1000sq metres is rated from “A” = energy efficient to “G” = very poor.

A continued issue is the potential effects of the “credit crunch” on our supply chains. The actions we have taken so far have been effective i.e. establishing frameworks with multiple suppliers to offset the risk of single supplier contracts

## **IT**

### **Recent key events, issues and future challenges:**

- Flu pandemic preparation – cross training project staff to maintain essential systems in event that key IT operations staff are unavailable due to pandemic.
- Government Connects Secure Extranet (GCSx) – activity to ensure Haringey can connect to secure network for sharing sensitive data between central government, local government and other public sector agencies.
- IT Value for Money review

## **General**

I am also concerned that corporate resources plays a full council role, particularly in areas affected by the economic recession and have asked officers to investigate how we might help in areas such as house building and mortgages, credit unions and bank loans, post office services, etc...