

## **EXECUTIVE MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL 5 December 2018**

### **Members Briefing on Budget (5<sup>th</sup> December, 6pm)**

1. I should like to remind members of the first of two briefings prior to the 2019/20 Budget.

This will be held at 6pm on 5<sup>th</sup> December prior to the full Council meeting, in the Mandela Room. This will include the opportunity for members to understand and ask questions on budget proposals for 2019/20 prior to them being considered for agreement by full Council in order to allow consultation on the proposed saving initiatives to commence. The proposals are not being agreed as part of the budget at this stage.

2. Following this period of consultation, the budget for 2019/20 will be brought forward to full Council in March 2019 and a further members' briefing will take place prior to that meeting
3. The briefing on 5<sup>th</sup> December will also cover early information which is available on areas which require further development before potentially being brought forward for consideration in 2020-2022 but it will not go into detail on those areas as the work has yet to be completed.
4. The report on the Strategic Plan Update, Medium-Term Financial Plan, Budget Proposals 2019/20, and Investment Strategy Review is a separate agenda item for this Council meeting.

### **Members Briefing Universal Credit (6<sup>th</sup> December, 10am)**

5. Following the overview of Universal Credit briefing delivered to members on 24 July 2018, I have asked for a further training session which has been arranged for 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018.
6. This aim of this session is to provide members with the ability to offer some basic help to residents who may struggle with the Universal Credit process and may approach you for assistance. I requested that this opportunity be provided for members along similar lines to training given to staff in our hubs.
7. This briefing will cover completion of the claim form and will also provide you with the opportunity to raise an initial concerns either you or your residents may have at the end of the training. It will take place in the Council Chamber.

### **Successes of Unclaimed Benefit Campaign**

8. As referred]to in my earlier reports, the Unclaimed Benefit Campaign and Hub Advice Service is a collaborative initiative developed by the Financial Inclusion Group (FIG) and funded by Middlesbrough Council. The partner organisations are

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) lead partner, Middlesbrough Council/Welfare Rights Unit, Cleveland Housing and Advice Centre (CHAC), Age UK Teesside and Actes (Achieving Change Through Enterprising Solutions).

9. Middlesbrough Council has provided funding and support to bring together the Unclaimed Benefit Campaign and HUB Advice service under one project. The projects offer one-to-one advice sessions with the aims of:
  - Providing advice regarding benefit entitlement and improve up take.
  - Encourage people to engage with health related services promoting a healthier lifestyle
  - Engage with a range of other support service and advice available.
10. Each does however still currently report their outcomes separately. The Hub Advice Service is a static service that runs weekly from 6 of our Community Hubs; Newport, Grove Hill, Thorntree, Easterside, Hemlington and North Ormesby. Since July 2013 the Hubs Advice Service has advised more than 3,700 clients and has identified **£7,941,122.13** in Unclaimed Benefits.
11. North Ormesby is funded separately from the other hubs and so its figures are also reported separately. Since 2017, there have been 684 client engagements with **£1,166,949.88** of benefits identified in North Ormesby.
12. The Unclaimed Benefit Campaign is delivered from a different venue each month. The venues have included schools, community venues, churches and social clubs.
13. To date, the Unclaimed Benefit Campaign has advised more than 3500 clients and has project gains at **£9,673,838.06** from January 2015, to date. The service is expected to hit a **£10M** award milestone within the next 2 weeks.
14. This very valuable work not only brings real financial benefits to the most economically fragile individuals and families in Middlesbrough, but also potentially millions of pounds into the local economy.

### **Collaborative Organisation of the Year**

15. I am pleased to report that the Council recently won 'Collaboration Organisation of the Year' at the global Objective Corporation's 2018 Innovation Awards, beating competition from across Europe, Australia and New Zealand.
16. Our award recognised the success of a project to rapidly share information about children that become missing from care between the Council, Cleveland Police, and a range of other partners. Previously, this process began with the Council filing a missing person's report with the police by phone. As police resources are stretched it could then take some hours for the police to attend and to begin coordinating a response. As a result of this project, all partners now receive an electronic alert as soon as documentation about a missing child is placed by the Council in the secure online shared workspace. This minimises the risks of details being recorded wrongly or misunderstood, and enables partners to mobilise available resources much more quickly to better safeguard these vulnerable children.

17. Members will be aware from my earlier reports that through its digital strategy, the Council aims to fully exploit digital solutions for the benefit of all of our communities, supporting the delivery of our strategic priorities for Middlesbrough. While as part of this journey we may sometimes experience issues with 'going digital', this project demonstrates that positive impact digital solutions can have for our residents and partners. It was particularly pleasing that the award was given for a category that reflects one of the Council's five corporate values, and I would like to congratulate the staff from Children's Care and Finance, Governance and Support that worked on the project.

### **Lawyers in Local Government**

18. I would like to also congratulate those within Legal Services, who were shortlisted for a Lawyers in Local Government award recently, for the Public/Private partnership working category.

19. This related to their work on Tees Advanced Manufacturing Park, which they undertook together with TVCA, Cleveland Developments and external solicitors on both sides. They were really pleased to be shortlisted, particularly given that across all of the categories and nominations nationally, there were only three shortlisted entries from local authorities in the North of England. Well done to all those concerned.

### **Middlesbrough College**

20. ICT Services prides itself on delivering great customer service and a stable and reliable infrastructure to users across the Council. One of the strategic aims is to extend this service to external customers and generate income in the process. Following detailed technical discussions ICT have entered into a formal three year contract to provide hosting services to Middlesbrough College. As many of the Colleges courses rely on ICT systems, they have a critical need to ensure high levels of availability and reliability, failing to do so could impact on courser delivery and revenue generation. Rather than invest in refurbishing their current systems they have opted to locate their Disaster Recovery systems in the Council's Data Centre at Resolution House. In the event their main systems fail the systems hosted by ICT will take over. ICT will provide a 24/7 365 service that will generate £75,000 of income over the life of the contract. Underground fibre connections are currently being laid and the contract is expected to go live before the end of the year.

### **EHM (Early Help Module) Children's Social Care**

21. The Children's Services application has been upgraded in preparation for the Early Help module to go Live on December 18<sup>th</sup>. The implementation of EHM, will link Early Help and Safeguarding, allowing information to be shared internally and with other organisations. It will enable staff in Early Help and Safeguarding to see the entire journey of the child on one system. This is not currently possible with the current use of two systems, LCS and Capita One, across Early Help and Safeguarding as these two systems work independently from one another

### **PSN Update**

22. I am pleased to announce that the 2018/19 submission for PSN (Public Sector Network) compliance has been approved by the Cabinet Office. This mandatory

annual audit demonstrates that the Councils ICT infrastructure has a strong security posture in place. The compliance audit involves a controlled “hack” against the Councils internal and external security systems. PSN compliance is required in order to access services hosted on the DWP (Department of Work & Pensions) IT network, such as Revenues & Benefits and Universal Credit. The approval marks the end of eight months of work involving a significant number of staff across the service. Work has already begun, to prepare for next year’s submission. Congratulations to all concerned.

## **ICT Apprentice**

23. Creating opportunities for young people within Middlesbrough who would like a career in ICT is an important focus for the ICT Service. In support of this initiative the First Line Team have a new Apprentice working with them called Ethan Wilson. Ethan has come to ICT Services through the local training service (ITEC) to complete a 15 month Infrastructure Technician (Level 3) course.
24. He is very keen and enthusiastic and has settled well in the team. He is currently being mentored by the First Line Engineers and is building up his knowledge and skills in order to deal with customer queries and issues independently.

## **People Strategy**

25. The Council’s people strategy was launched 15 months ago. This strategy sets out our workforce plan to deliver the Mayor’s Vision and the Council’s strategic priorities. An ambitious workload was set to deliver against our strategy and significant progress has been made over the past 15 months. Key achievements include:
  - Corporate Values developed and launched
  - Robust customer excellence initiative rolled out and launched
  - 360 degree feedback initiative completed to support LMT/Head of Service development
  - Chief Executive quarterly staff briefings and weekly LMY de-brief introduced with a communication cascade mechanism in place
  - Corporate Equality and Inclusion Group established, led by an LMT Champion, with associated Disability and BAME Networks
  - Robust corporate induction process in place
  - Implementation of a range of employee engagement forums and employee recognition activities
  - Robust manager development programme in place to support new Middlesbrough Manager profile
  - Workforce planning/succession planning conducted for all directorates
  - Leadership Academy and First Line Manager Academy launched

## **Mentoring Programme**

26. Having a robust and effective mentoring programme is really important to supporting talent development. HR have just launched a pilot of a mentoring programme which will involve 10 of our senior managers mentoring staff members for a period of 3 months to ensure we have the process tested before the launch the programme more widely across the workforce in Spring/Summer 2019. The pilot will include testing of the mentor/mentee matching process, documentation and the upskilling of mentors via eLearning and designed workshops. HR have identified mentoring to be beneficial for:

- Individuals wishing to progress and develop their career further
- Individuals who would benefit from spending time with subject matter experts to build knowledge and experience i.e. project management etc.
- Females interested in progressing into management roles.
- Individuals from BAME or with a disability who would benefit from having a mentor

## **Developing Employer Brand and Recruitment Appeal**

27. Middlesbrough Council is a great place to work but there is a need to improve our employer brand and recruitment appeal. Research shows that over 70% of potential candidates visit the organisation's website when seeking job opportunities and it takes a matter of seconds to capture their attention. The HR Service is currently developing the recruitment pages to attract candidates and improve the promotion of the employment offer. It will highlight the benefits of working for the Council including the values of the organisation, the local area / environment, transport links, flexible working, work life balance, a generous holiday entitlement, pension scheme, etc.

## **Welcome Page**

28. The Welcome Page is currently under development to improve the new employee experience. It is available to all newly appointed employees and provides lots of useful information, including details on the Council Values, induction arrangements, welcome events, the Staff Portal, People Manager (if applicable), pension information etc.

**Nicky Walker**  
**Executive Member for Finance and Governance**