

## **Executive Member Report to Council**

### **Councillor Chris Hobson - Executive Member for Finance and Governance**

**Council - 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

#### **1. DECISIONS**

The following papers went to Executive on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Treasury Management and Provision of Internal Audit

#### **2. STRATEGIC**

The Strategic Plan and Mayor's Priorities are being considered by Executive on 8 October ahead of going to Council on 4 December. They set out the overall strategic direction and political priorities for the Council and will help a great deal in setting out our agenda so that we are working to the same objectives.

#### **3. INVOLVEMENT & PROMOTION**

##### **Working Differently**

It is great to see our all Executive members and officers trying to find different ways of working and looking at ways to try to save money. I had a chat with the Head of Museums this week who shared some of his ideas for improving the Dorman Museum and promoting Captain Cook museum so that more money will be generated and the cost will reduce to the council.

He told me:

'Since January 2019, Middlesbrough Museums (Dorman Museum & Captain Cook Birthplace Museum) has been undertaking a master-planning project which aims to ensure the museums are modern, forward thinking and innovative museums while remaining resilient, sustainable and resistant to change. The project has involved the development of a new vision for Middlesbrough Museums, the production of a new five-year Forward Plan to help us deliver our new vision, and a Development Plan which makes recommendations for changes and improvements that would put us in the best position possible to achieve our Forward Plan.

The aim of this work is to review and refresh systems, structures and processes to ensure both museums contribute to the wider social, cultural and economic development

of the town while maximising opportunities for increasing our commerciality and self-generated income to support the Service's wider functions'

There will be more temporary exhibitions and a big push on the Dresser Exhibition. He told me he is delighted that the Executive member for Culture is showing so much encouragement and enthusiasm.

I can say that this is one department that will change. The executive member has new ideas nearly every day and is eager to take on board any suggestions that are brought to her. Nothing happens overnight but I do know that her enthusiasm shows no bounds.

## **Complaints & Compliments**

The Council has recently revised its corporate complaints policy to ensure that in future complaints from our customers are resolved in a more timely and proactive manner. The corporate policy covers complaints about all services except adult social care, children's services and public health, for which the processes are set out in statutory regulations. The key change in the new policy is that services will aim to resolve complaints within three days of receipt where it is possible to do so, without recourse to more formal complaints investigations. A 'real time' complaints dashboard has been launched alongside the new policy, so that senior managers can ensure that the policy is being implemented effectively and also put in place learning from the complaints that we receive.

## **ICT Visit**

I have had a tour of the 2 ICT Data Centres at Boho and Resolution House. The servers occupy much less space than I anticipated. Once again, Middlesbrough Council looked at alternative options when the original servers were due for replacement and managed to improve performance and reduce costs. Following this upgrade Dell produced a Case Study highlighting Middlesbrough Council as an example of good practise.

Quote from the Case Study: *"As its managed services contract came to an end, Middlesbrough Council's IT team took the opportunity to introduce modern technology and improve the performance, reliability and efficiency of IT services in serving the council and the public."*

The completion of this year's annual Disaster Avoidance testing over weekend (14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> September) was very successful. The team ran a number of different testing scenarios designed to prepare us to respond in the event of a real emergency. I'm please to say the testing was a success and the equipment performed as it should protecting the Council critical systems and data.

## **Internal Audit Provision**

The Council has had a shared internal audit service with Redcar and Cleveland since 2010 which has worked well. It has, however, become increasingly difficult to recruit new staff and to provide the wide range of services required of an internal audit service; and Redcar and Cleveland have made the decision to no longer offer a shared service. The report going to Executive on 8 October sets out the options for the future and recommends that both Councils join with the service provided by Veritau. Veritau is a company formed by North Yorkshire and York Councils which already provides services

to these two councils and to the district councils within North Yorkshire. This option will enable the Council to benefit from a proven public service and the expertise and economies of scale that it can offer. All staff will transfer to Veritau. I am confident that we will get a very good service from this going forward.

**Councillor Chris Hobson**  
**Executive Member for Finance and Governance**