Organisation

Portfolio Updates

Reigate & Banstead
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Banstead | Horley | Redhill | Reigate

Finance & Governance

Finance

- **Progress 2020/21**

  Update to MTFP approved by Executive in July and refreshed in the November budget report

  2021/22 Capital Investment and Treasury Management Strategies approved

  Regular updates to Executive on Covid-19 budget impacts; monthly returns submitted to MHCLG and first income loss claim submitted

  Draft Statement of Accounts 2018/19 published; significant work undertaken over recent months to review asset categories and ensure compliance with Code of Practice

- **Budget 2021/22**

  Service & Financial Planning progressing on schedule with report to 19 November Executive and Budget Scrutiny Panel on 3 December

  At November, forecast 2021/22 revenue budget gap can be balanced through use of reserves but ongoing the impacts of income loss due to Covid is a significant concern

  Capital Programme proposals for 2021/22 onwards are relatively modest following significant growth this year; to be funded through prudential borrowing

Finance & Governance (cont)

Governance

Progress 2020/21

- Moved all member committees and mayoral functions to virtual meetings, and events (including Remembrance Day) to preserve transparent accessible democratic process during the pandemic.

- Democratic and Governance Task group revised the Member Code of Conduct (adopted by Council), Protocol on Officer Member relations, Code of Corporate Governance, developed and implemented a protocol for Group Leader meetings, and reviewed and implemented the process for electing the Mayor.

- Creation and administration of the Audit Committee and the Recovery Scrutiny Panel.

- Supporting the conferment of an Alderwoman and an Alderman.

- The Evaluating Overview and Scrutiny Panel have made recommendations to improve how the Committee operates.

- Preparing a review of the Constitution including the Standards Committee processes to reflect best practice and transparent principles.

Revenues, Benefits & Fraud

Council Tax & Business Rates Collection

- At the end of Period 8, Council Tax collection for 2020/21 was at 74.62%, down on last year by 1.30% which equates to £1.6m. Around 2,500 accounts had their payments deferred to February and March 2021 from the start of the year, which has affected the in-year collection rate

- At the end of Period 8, Business Rates collection for 2020/21 was at 76.90%, up on last year by 0.48%. With the increased reliefs for businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure industries, this has significantly reduced the amount to be collected. The value of the reliefs is reimbursed by central government

- The first 2020/21 Magistrates Court date is on 16th December 2020, for both Council Tax and Business Rates

- From November, the RBBC recovery team has been providing a recovery function on behalf of Waverley Borough Council, as part of its commercial work

Revenues, Benefits & Fraud (cont)

Counter Fraud

- Total savings in Q1 and Q2 from identifying fraud are £100,042.72 (based on Cabinet Office assumptions). The savings relates to housing and Council Tax fraud.

Business Grants & Covid Support

- In the initial grant schemes 1,875 businesses were paid grants totalling £23,760,000

- The Local Restrictions Support Grants (Closed) has seen 390 businesses paid a total of £644,488 up to 01/12/20

- The Additional Restrictions Grants (discretionary) has seen 28 businesses paid a total of £41,016 up to 29/11/20

- Local Restrictions Support Grants (Open) expected to apply from 3/12/20

- Test & Trace Payments – eligible for people told by the NHS to self-isolate and will lose earnings. 59 payments of £500 had been made up to 01/12/20

Investment & Companies

Projects

- Project planning and consultation for a crematorium in the borough, to both meet local needs and provide a source of future income.

- Supported the redevelopment of Marketfield Way, which will help boost the economy in Redhill and the wider area.

- Acquired land to support future development and regeneration around the potential Horley Business Park and the Reading Arch Road area.

- Advanced work to establish a Revenues and Benefits business providing expertise to other organisations.

Structures and Commercial Governance

- Appointed new Director of Commercial and Investment to develop and coordinate commercial activities.

- Developed plans for an updated commercial structure, to allow for more efficient management, clearer reporting, and greater consistency across the organisation

Investment & Companies (cont.)

Investment Management

- Managed the Council's property assets during the recent coronavirus pandemic to maintain tenants and income, as well as taking steps to support the community.

- Reviewed and assessed a number of other potential commercial opportunities, including turning down several which weren't sufficiently promising.

- Continued to maintain clear monitoring and governance of the Council's existing investments, including companies.

Future Plans

- Continue to develop the Council's in-house expertise and improve structures and processes for commercial activity across the organisation.

- Review Council fees and charges to balance costs, benefits and social considerations.

- Seek more opportunities to invest in the borough and stay financially sustainable.

Legal & Procurement

Legal - Progress 2020/21

- Recruitment of Head of Legal & Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer in May 2020;
- The skills and resilience of the legal team are being increased by:
    - junior members of the team progressing from paralegal and legal secretary to a trainee solicitor and paralegal respectively;
    - Recruitment of a property lawyer and planning lawyer- interviews are in December.
- Data protection and Information Governance will move from IT to Legal Services in December, ensuring all legal governance functions are under a single service.

Land Charges - Progress 2020/21

- Undertaking a review of Local Land Charge questions to improve accuracy and efficiency. Working with the Business Improvement Team to migrate Building Control Data to increase the quality of land charges information.

Procurement - Progress 2020/21

- Undertaking a review of the Contract Procedure Rules within the Council's Constitution. Building on the success of centralising the procurement service.

Corporate Policy & Resources

Performance management and PMO

- KPIs updated for 2020/21 following recommendations from the all-party working group.

- New performance reporting template introduced which provides additional contextual information.

- Dashboards now provided for members for Organisation, Place and People projects, providing regular updates on the delivery of key Council projects.

- Future focus: Continued efficient and effective reporting and operation of the project boards.

Corporate Policy including Environmental Strategy

- New Corporate Plan and Environmental Sustainability Strategy – now developed and agreed fall within this portfolio to oversee implementation.

- Future focus: Will include implementation of sustainability activities and monitoring and reporting on the first full year of the Corporate Plan.

Communications and Customer Contact Data & Insight

Objectives & Progress

- **Communications and Customer Contact Data & Insight** – The COVID-19 pandemic has required Communications and Customer Contact to concentrate almost exclusively on supporting Reigate & Banstead Borough Council's emergency response. In doing so, there has been the opportunity for progression of key objectives from the business plan. This includes development of the councils communications channels (including those for the digitally-excluded) and provision of an enhanced resident contact interface, particularly via social media, as well as the traditional phone and website contact channels.

- **Data & Insight** –The newly created Data & Insight team has been re-focused away from its more broader work, to provide intelligence to inform the organisation's COVID response work. This has allowed our response and services to remain relevant, co-ordinated and efficient. By way of example, the next slide illustrates work by the team to identify locations of vulnerable people in a specific area – using assisted waste collection, community alarm user, housing benefit claimant, taxi voucher scheme and property adaptions for disability data. This enabled targeted and relevant support, interventions and communications to be provided to those audiences.

Communications and Customer Contact Data & Insight (cont)
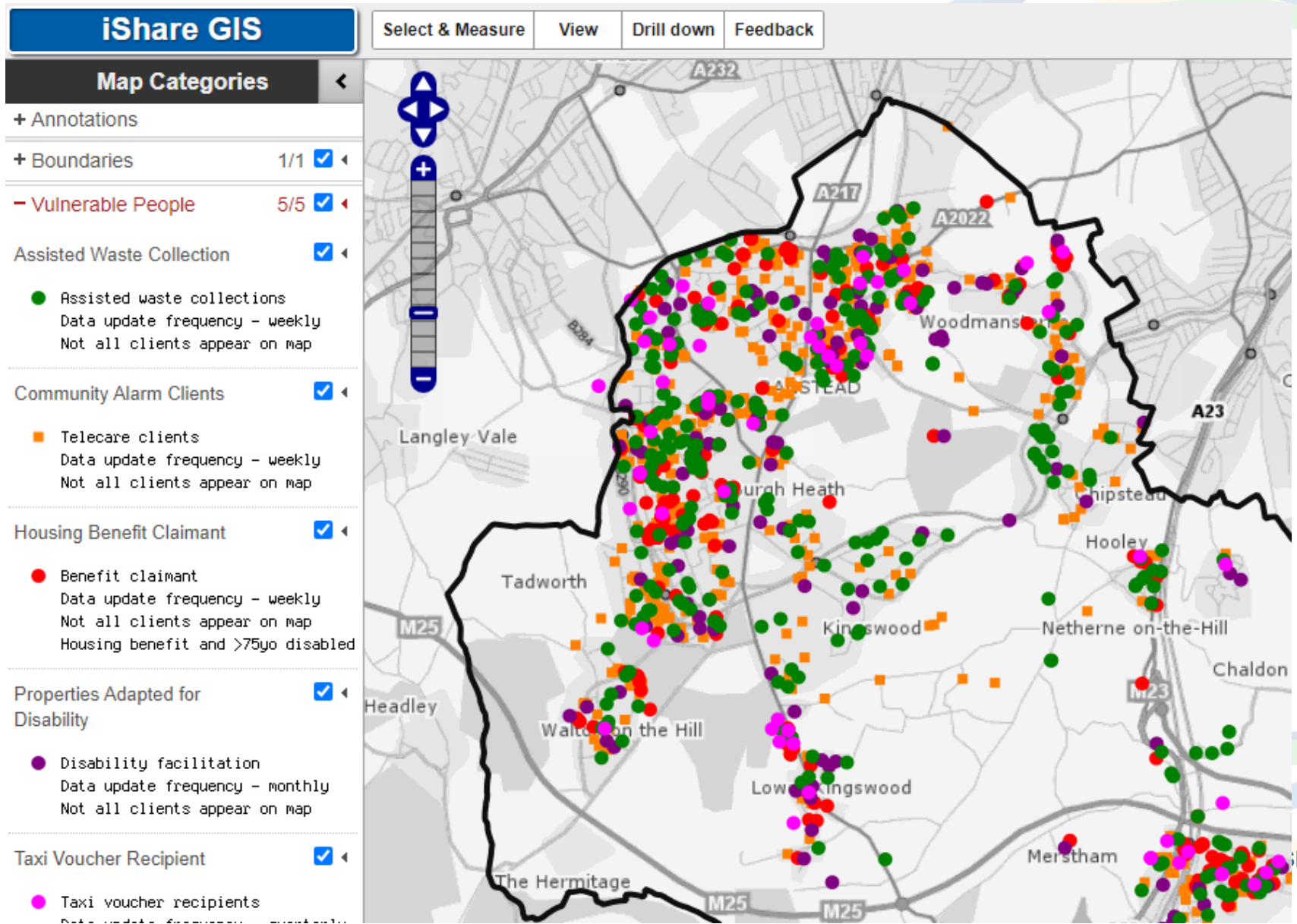
Organisational Development & HR

Human Resources - BAU Statistics

- Continued to successfully run our monthly staff and member payrolls whilst working remotely

- Since March 2020 HR have supported the advertising/recruitment of 68 roles and worked with managers to ensure we onboarded 66 new starters

- Apprenticeship engagement has continued –
  - Currently we have 7 apprentices (Level 2 through to Level 6 – degree level)
  - Currently recruiting a further 2 apprentices (Level 2/3 and Level 3)
  - 9 existing employees are upskilling via apprenticeships (Level 3 through to Level 7 – Masters level)

- Latest rolling year (1.10.19 – 30.9.20) figures:
  - Turnover – 9%
  - Sickness absence –

	Total	Short Term	Long Term
Average Days Sick per employee	8.1	4	4.1

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Organisational Development & HR (cont)

Organisational Development / HR- Covid

- Planned launch work for OD strategy paused whilst the organisation focuses on the immediate response to the pandemic - immediate OD priority shifted to staff wellbeing and supporting our staff given the different ways of working needed

- Staff survey - late summer 2020 with a wellbeing focus
  - 388 surveys completed = an overall response rate of 66%
    - online staff – 92% response rate
    - offline staff – 22% response rate
  - Staff reported feeling valued, supported, proud, committed but also stressed, exhausted, anxious, irritated
  - Top challenges for online and offline staff reviewed
  - Our net promotor score – based on the responses to the question 'how likely are you to recommend RBBC as a good place to work to a friend or family member' is +39 (up from +27 in January 2017, and -13 in June 2014)

- Lockdown 1 response – redeployed 90 staff to support RBBC's response to Covid
- Lockdown 2 response – so far approx. 50 staff have been redeployed

Information Technology

Progress 2020/21

- IT have delivered transformational change to the Council since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Systems have been rapidly implemented to enable staff and Council Members to work remotely and securely. New processes have been developed to ensure IT systems deliver high availability.

- The CRM system has been developed to enable the delivery of Welfare support to those in need and ensuring that personal data is held securely.

- Video conferencing facilities have been and continue to be developed to enable the delivery of Council Committee meetings online.

- IT Projects continue to be delivered with particular focus on improving resilience and Disaster Recovery capability.

Covid-19: Recovery

Deputy Leader:

- Lead Executive member in relation to Covid recovery; chair of the Recovery Steering Group; regular attendance at meetings of all five workstream to ensure strategic oversight; core member of Finance & Income workstream

Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources:

- Chair of the Finance & Income recovery workstream, which has provided ongoing review of the financial impact of Covid, commercial property income streams, revenues collection (eg Council tax) and will continue to provide a steer on financial and commercial considerations associated with Covid recovery and the 'new normal'

Executive Member for Investment and Companies:

- Chair of the Council Services and Projects recovery workstream, including advising on the safe reintroduction of services and activities put on hold as a result of the first Lockdown. This workstream will continue to have oversight of the recovery of projects and services, including any impacted by ongoing Covid restrictions