

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

From: The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Organisational Delivery	Report Number: CMU23
To: Council	Date of meeting: 26 July 2018

TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR LAW & GOVERNANCE

1. Overview of Directorate

- 1.1 The Law & Governance group comprises Audit & Risk Management, Democratic Services, Information Management and the Shared Legal Services. The Assistant Director is also the Councils' Monitoring Officer and the section therefore plays a critical role in supporting the work of the Monitoring Officer.
- 1.2 The Law & Governance teams are predominantly support services and contribute to the delivery of the Joint Strategic Plan by providing professional support and advice to all other service areas. The team have an essential role in maintaining and promoting good governance throughout the organisation.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3. Key Activities/Issues Over the Past Three Months

3.1 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The new GDPR provisions came into force on 25th May 2018. The Council now holds completed information asset registers for all service areas and 92% of staff members have completed e-learning. Awareness training has also been offered to all Councillors. Contracts with third party suppliers continue to be updated to ensure that they are GDPR compliant and privacy impact assessments are being completed for all new software which holds or processes personal data.

3.2 Electoral Review of Ward Boundaries

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is due to publish its final recommendations for warding in Babergh and Mid Suffolk on 7th August 2018. The Order implementing the revised number of councillors and new ward boundaries is due to be laid in Parliament on 4th September 2018 and will be made 40 sitting days after this date.

3.3 Constitution Working Group

The Constitution Working Group has now held its first meeting and has highlighted a number of areas within the constitution for revision. Officers are now working on drafting these amendments. It was agreed that the Working Group would meet again in September to confirm the revised wording before making recommendations to Council.

3.4 National Democracy Week

The inaugural National Democracy Week was held between 2nd and 6th July 2018, marking the 90th anniversary of the 1928 Equal Franchise Act which gave women the same voting rights as men. The Council supported this important event by launching a series of videos which highlighted the different roles held by Councillors and the work that we all undertake. The Chairman of the Council visited Thurston Community College on 3rd July to talk with a group of students studying democracy.

We also supported the 'Be A Councillor' campaign and promoted registering to vote through our social media channels.

4. **Future Key Activities**

4.1 District and Town & Parish Council Elections – 2nd May 2019

Preparations have already commenced for the all-out elections to the District Council and Town and Parish Councils on 2nd May 2019. Information for prospective candidates will be made available on the Councils' website as we move closer to the election date and details of key processes for electors, candidates and election agents will be published throughout the election timetable. The Returning Officer is planning to verify the ballots immediately after the close of poll from 10pm on Thursday and then hold the count during the day on Friday 3rd May 2019. The verification and count will be held at Wherstead Park.

The Monitoring Officer will be issuing 'purdah' guidance to Councillors and Officers in due course.

4.2 Induction Programme for Newly Elected Councillors

Alongside election preparations work is being undertaken on the induction process for Councillors. This will include a councillor handbook, orientation events at Endeavour House and a suite of training events. The dates of these events should be confirmed before nominations open so that prospective candidates can be provided with the programme.

4.3 Review of UK Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries

The Boundary Commission for England will be publishing its final report for UK Parliamentary Constituency boundaries to Government on 5th September 2018. Convention requires that Parliament is the first audience of statutory reports, therefore the recommendations will not be made public until the Secretary of State lays the report in Parliament – i.e. some time after 5th September. Once the recommendations have been published, further information will be circulated to Councillors about the impact on constituencies that fall within the District.

4.4 Joint Member Briefings

Due to recent low attendance at the joint member briefings, a survey is being prepared to gain Councillors' views on how these events should run in the future. The survey will seek views on preferred scheduling, locations and agenda items.