

## City Solicitor's Directorate Services

### Work during Covid-19

<b>Democratic &amp; Civic Support.</b>	
<b>Lord Mayoralty</b>	
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Completion of Risk Assessments for reopening of the Guildhall, and Lord Mayor's attendance at events, in readiness for when opportunities arise;</li><li>• Continuing of virtual messages from LM for various events (VJ Day; 999 Emergency Services Day);</li><li>• Lord Mayor Support Officer undertaking additional role of PA to the Strategic Management Board, to cover maternity absence, whilst mayoralty events remain low in number;</li><li>• Continuing to work with event organisers for civic events which have been delayed/postponed to 2021;</li></ul>
<b>Elections &amp; Electoral Registration</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preparing to undertake the statutory annual "electoral canvas" (which is being delivered in a different way to that in previous years in line with the necessary regulations);</li><li>• Preparing for the triple elections planned for May 2021 – Exeter City Council, Devon County Council, and Police &amp; Crime Commissioner – including acting as Police Area Returning Officer for the latter.</li></ul>
<b>Democratic Services</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continuing to "tweak" the running of virtual meetings to ensure maximum efficiency;</li><li>• Continuing to provide training and support to members in the use of Meeting technology;</li><li>• Reviewing of the induction programme for councillors in readiness for the post 2021 election;</li><li>• Redeployment of staff (part time) to support the Organisational Development work programme.</li></ul>
<b>Corporate Support Unit</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continuing to ensure safe working practices within the Civic Centre for those still required to work in the office;</li><li>• Ongoing support for the raising of orders and payment of bills so as to ensure council met its responsibilities to suppliers;</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordination with Strata of requests for additional IT equipment to be taken by staff to allow for home working;</li> <li>• Maintaining contact with tenants of the Civic Centre to ensure safe working practices followed throughout the buildings;</li> <li>• Active participants in Organisational Development work programme and in particular members of the 2 Task and Finish Groups looking at Orders/Invoicing and Complaints handling;</li> </ul>
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<b>Human Resources</b>
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<b>Activities</b>	<p>COVID continues to add significant workload for the HR team and critical Work stream of HR &amp; payroll team supporting the whole council benefiting both management and employees alike.</p> <p>This work has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staying abreast of Government Guidance to inform Council decision making and the formulation of appropriate Action Plans relating to staff;</li> <li>• Fielding and responding to a large number of staff enquiries relating to COVID;</li> <li>• Continued work dealing with the council's furlough claims to submitted to HRMC resulting in income;</li> <li>• Revising and delivering appropriate contractual changes;</li> <li>• Rapid development and deployment of related employment Policy;</li> <li>• Updating the COVID FAQs for City Council employees;</li> <li>• Supporting SMB policy and decision making.</li> </ul> <p>In addition (and in spite of COVID!) we have successfully delivered the technical HR aspects of the TUPE transfer of 160 ex-Parkwood Leisure staff into the Council as well as dealing with implications of the 2.75% National Pay settlement.</p>
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<b>Legal Services</b>
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<b>Key challenges</b>	<p>Legal Services has been restructured with the new structure having taken effect from 1 August 2020. The team have risen to the challenge of working remotely and have been able to maintain very close links with client departments and embraced the challenges and opportunities of agile and flexible working.</p> <p>In addition to the above, in May this year, the team have also implemented Iken, an-online case management system which has enabled the legal officers to work remotely on virtual files. Training</p>
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	<p>affected by the lockdown and Procurement Policy Note 04/20 on the transitional phase of lockdown. Working with procurement in preparing a Council policy for providing supplier relief in accordance with PPPN 02/20.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Application of the law in relation to applications for possession of land;</li><li>• Application of the law in relation to applications for possession of residential and commercial property and the ban on evictions;</li><li>• Advising on the application of the Act: Shielding, local support systems and grocery deliveries, Local Resilience Forums, Business Rates relief, Small Business Grants Funds (SBGF) and Retail, hospitality and leisure grant fund;</li><li>• Advising on the application of the Public Contracts Act 2020 to live procurement processes affected by the lockdown and put on hold together with consideration of the law on abandonment of procurement processes;</li><li>• Advice on disputed procurement processes;</li><li>• Advice in relation to the review of the Council's commercial property portfolio where tenants are facing difficulties in payment rents and measures put in place to alleviate those difficulties.</li><li>• Employment related advice in the context of the challenges posed by Lockdown.</li></ul>