

Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

11 September 2018

Responses to Questions

Item 1

3rd October 2018

Follow-up from August Responses

Question

Cllr Cunning asked for further clarification on the Tell Us Once (TUO) service.

Answer

The Council offer TUO on behalf of DWP. Informants of a death are issued with a letter and personal reference number from the council to use and input information either electronically or by telephone about the deceased.

DWP's TUO project will notify:

- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) - to deal with personal tax (you need to contact HMRC separately for business taxes, like VAT)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) - to cancel benefits, for example Income Support
- Passport Office - to cancel a British passport
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) - to cancel a licence and remove the person as the keeper of up to 5 vehicles (contact DVLA separately if you keep or sell a vehicle)
- the local council - to cancel Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, a Blue Badge, inform council housing services and remove the person from the electoral register
- Veterans UK - to cancel Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments

Tell Us Once will also contact some public sector pension schemes so that they cancel future pension payments. They'll notify:

- My Civil Service Pension
- NHS Pension Scheme
- Armed Forces Pension Scheme
- pension schemes for NHS staff, teachers, police and firefighters in Scotland
- local authority pension schemes, except where Tell Us Once is not available

Within the council the process is that the City

	Registrars Office pass a copy of the death certificate to Customer and Business Services who then ensure that the information is shared with Council family departments e.g. Council Tax to update the council tax liability, Electoral Registration Office to update the Electoral register, LES for garden maintenance, SWS for Blue Badges and homecare services etc.
Question	Cllr Millar requested further information on Corporate Credit Cards in relation to the criteria and which officers have access to CCC.
Answer	<p>The corporate credit card procedures states:</p> <p>“Members of the Council Directorate may be issued with corporate credit cards to enable them to make purchases that could not otherwise be made via any other method in line with approved Council procedures.</p> <p>Cards may also be issued to other Council officers where this is deemed appropriate. In these cases a formal request requires to be submitted to the Executive Director of Finance for approval.”</p>
<u>Audit Reports</u>	
<u>Item 3c – CR – Establishment Visits</u>	
Question	Cllr Cuning asked for information in relation to school premises and in particular after school clubs around legal responsibilities.
Answer	<p>The Education Support Service Manager advised that the head of establishment is responsible for all school related activities which occur onsite during school hours, including afterschool clubs.</p> <p>In the case of school lets (which are normally outwith school hours), the responsibility lies with the janitor and the person taking the let. The let agreement outlines their responsibilities in relation to the building.</p>
Question	Cllr Cuning asked about Fire Wardens and First Aiders and if this was voluntary.
Answer	<p>Corporate Health and Safety advised that the role of First Aider is voluntary. Certified First Aiders receive a payment where they have taken on this responsibility and HR are responsible for the management of these positions.</p> <p>Similarly the role of Fire Warden is, for the most part,</p>

	<p>a voluntary role and this role does <i>not</i> attract a financial payment. In some sectors (e.g. residential care) however the role of Fire Warden is written into staff responsibilities to ensure that there is cover for shift changes. In these cases it is <i>not</i> voluntary and forms part of the roles and responsibilities of the position.</p> <p>In the absence of a Fire Warden the responsibility for fire duties falls to the Manager (e.g. Head of Establishment) and reporting officers are in place throughout Council buildings, to report to the Fire Warden when a floor has been cleared etc. during a fire drill/evacuation.</p>
<u>Item 3d – CR – Non-Contract spend</u>	
Question	Councillor Hepburn wanted clarification in relation to 3.2 in the report and Key control 1 with regard to Education Services.
Answer	<p>Education Services received copies of Spend Opportunity Analysis Reports (SOARs) but had not reviewed them or responded to the Corporate Procurement Unit (CPU) with explanations for the use of the top five non-contracted suppliers.</p> <p>For these and the additional sample of non-contracted suppliers selected by the auditor, Education Services were among the three Services who could not provide justification for using at least one of these suppliers.</p> <p>Additionally, Education Services was among the four Services where there was repeated usage of a non-contracted supplier but the possibility of a contract being put in place had not been explored.</p>
Question	Bailie MacLeod sought further clarification around the list available to CPU and services in relation to non-contract spend.
Answer	The CPU produced the SOARs each period based on all SAP accounts payable expenditure, but excluding payments made via the One Time Vendor (OTV) route. Any suppliers for whom an adequate explanation had already been provided were removed, to prevent the same suppliers being queried each time.

	<p>CPU then identified the top five suppliers each period by spend against the four Services' cost centres and issued the SOAR to a contact for review and an explanation.</p> <p>OTV reports are issued by CBS to four Services (FS, EDS, LES, and DRS).</p>
<u>Item 3f – DRS – Developer Contributions</u>	
Question	Committee requested that the Executive Director for Regeneration and the Economy submit and present a report to the October meeting with regard to Developer Contributions.
Answer	A report has been submitted for the 3 October committee and the Executive Director will attend to present the report.
<u>Monitoring Reports</u>	
<u>Item 4 Investment Programme – SWS</u>	
Question	Cllr Cunning asked for further information in relation to Merrylee and how long overdue this was and the amount of damages due from the developer/contractor.
Answer	<p>This project is currently 14 months behind programme.</p> <p>The amount of L&A damages that can be applied for a project is outlined within the contract. Under the terms and conditions of the contract, Home Group on behalf of GCC have issued pay less notices, deducting L&A damages from the monthly valuations. The interim amount of L&A damages deducted to date is £42,250 (reflecting 13 weeks).</p> <p>On the 24th November 2017, and on 26th July 2018, the Contractor submitted notifications of delay. L&A damages could not be further applied until notifications of delay had been assessed.</p> <p>Based on the information provided, the Contract Administrator could not reach a determination and on 9th February 2018 requested additional information. This left the matter of delay open and prevented further damages being applied.</p>

	<p>The Contractor provided an initial response to the request for substantiation, however this was minimal and the Contract Administrator on 24th August 2018 made an interim award of 3.5 weeks, based on what information was provided, and highlighting the requirement for further information from the contractor.</p> <p>L&A damages could be applied to valuations following the decision of 24 August 2018, subject to the issuing of appropriate certificates and notices to the Contractor.</p>
<u>Item 4 – Investment Programme Q1 – DRS</u>	
Question	Councillor Millar requested further information in relation to Vacant and Derelict Land projects.
Answer	See Appendix 1

This paper will be considered at the start of the committee agenda however requests for clarification on the answers can be made via the committee clerk in advance of the committee meeting.