

Councillor Bridget Kendrick Finance and Organisation

Revenues and Exchequer

The first quarter of the year has been a challenging one for the Team as a result of Coronavirus, with a huge amount of customer contact in addition to the normal peak of demand that occurs in the first quarter of every year. The team have responded brilliantly and have been providing excellent and efficient customer service to residents, many of whom are experiencing uncertainty in their own circumstances at the current time.

The Revenues Team have also played a key role in the administration of the business grants schemes that were established in April.

The Exchequer Team have had to completely revisit their working processes to ensure service delivery during home working. This has ensured that the Council has been able to pay suppliers are being paid in a timely manner.

Benefits

The Benefits team have seen a large increase in contact for advice and support since the beginning of the pandemic. Compared to the same period last year, there have been almost three times as many new claims for benefit and nearly four times as many Universal Credit notifications. The team have been working hard to support this additional case load as well as understanding the implications of the furlough scheme and its corresponding impacts on benefits entitlements. There is an expectation of a further increase in workload as the furlough scheme comes to an end and there is the potential to see redundancies as a consequence.

ICT

MVDC technical infrastructure has continued to work successfully, supporting up to 250 MVDC colleagues connecting concurrently to MVDC applications and data. This has been made possible by the capital investment in Laptops and enhanced Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery, providing MVDC with the capacity and resilience to continue operating under 'lockdown'.

Other exceptional items in response to the current situation have been the rapid implementation of enhanced home-telephony capability for Community Services in their support of vulnerable residents, and working with MVDC business colleagues to develop a 'Grant Application and Allocation' system for Small Businesses – to date distributing grants worth £17.7m to just almost 1,400 small businesses in Mole Valley.