

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

February 2023

COUNCILLOR LUCY SHIRES

For the period January – February 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Information Technology

Following a failure to recruit appropriately skilled and experienced staff ICT have recruited 2 Technical Support Assistants. These are entry level posts in the structure with the intention to develop them through on-going formal and on-the-job training. This recruitment has taken a considerable amount of ICT team time.

We have resumed the planned program for replacement of out of warranty laptops.

In order to maximise the benefits of the Microsoft licensing the replacement of Kaspersky anti-virus with Microsoft's Defender anti-virus. This work will also generate a small cost saving when completed.

Elections have been relocated to the committee room in preparation for the coming elections.

Devices for the new cohort of members have been procured in readiness to issue as soon as possible after the election. We will be working on the configuration with the aim of simplifying the remote logging on process whilst ensuring that the cyber security protection it delivers is maintained.

Tablets for field working access to the Concerto asset management system have been issued to the MSOs in Property Services. These will improve the response times and be more efficient in the management of repair and maintenance activity across the Council's estate.

The cyber security event logging software has been upgraded to maintain the protection it provides to the Council's IT systems.

Work (including evenings and weekends) has been taking place to enable the replacement of the core data network to be as seamless as possible. However to reduce the risk of disruption at a busy time of year the final cutover will be affected early in the next financial year.

The new finance system “Civica Financials” is now live as planned. However, this remains a resource intensive workstream for the Finance and IT teams. There are still significant post go-live works to complete the project and this will continue for some time.

Further software improvements for the Planning system Uniform are being implemented including an on-line measuring tool for plan verification and an updated software interface to the planning portal.

Preparation for the end of year related software upgrades to the HR and Revs & Benefits system has commenced.

New and updated intranet pages for:

- Health & Wellbeing
- Car Park Permits
- Procedures for disruption at Council meetings
- Corporate Leadership updates published
- Corporate plan made available on the intranet homepage

New and updated Website pages for:

- Climate and environment
- Cost of living help
- Neighbourhood plan
- Council property to let
- Polling place review
- Voter ID requirements
- Glaven Valley updates
- Business Hub developments
- Maintenance on Webchat function
- Planning policy consultations
- Rewilding pages updated
- Caravan and Mobile Home site licencing info published
- Updates for Planning Policy
- Bin service announcements page

Work to support the issuing of bills and reminders to Garden Bin customers
New online register of interests form for members ahead of the May elections
Council Tax online consultation content and web form.

Updates to the online Council Complaints process:

Noise and Nuisance complaints from Council webforms are now fully integrated with the Environmental Health management system, Assure.

Updates to Missed Bin reporting process

Updates for Waste reporting forms – broken glass, graffiti, littering etc

New Notification of a Death form

Offer to Pay form completed

Updates and maintenance for Coastal Issues reporting form

Building Inspections booking request form
Food hygiene rating revisits request form

Customer Services

The New Year has started with a significant increase in residents contacting the council after an expected reduction in customer contact leading up to Christmas.

In January we received the second highest customer contact rate this financial year with our Customer Service Advisors dealing with over 7,800 customer contacts across all contact channels.

The significant increase in contact was a result of the following:

- Environmental Services sending out 4000 letters to non-direct debit playing residents requesting their payment for their garden bin service for 2022/23.
- Revenues Services recommencing recovery work, resulting in an increase of reminder notices being issued.
- Electoral Services writing out to every household, confirming who is registered to vote at the property and advising them of the requirements for voter ID in this coming May Election.

Despite this resulting in an extremely busy time for the Customer Services department we have managed to keep the average telephony wait time to 6 minutes 3 seconds. Work continues to reduce this further.

A number of internal training sessions on improving Customer Service have been delivered to council managers and supervisors. More will follow to ensure all staff receive the training.

Our new team members having now finished their induction training are already making an impact on our performance. Their enthusiasm and desire to help all our residents with their enquiries will be well received.

Further recruitment is in progress to replace internal secondments and resignations.

Digital Mailroom/North Norfolk Visitors Centre

The Digital Mailroom have proactively managed a fluctuating workload in December due to the Royal Mail postage strikes.

We are currently prioritising the training of staff to ensure service delivery is robust and sustainable, alongside introducing systems to increase performance management

The North Norfolk Visitor Centre is actively expanding its use of social media and other customer contact systems to allow greater reach to potential visitors all year round.

Property Services

Cromer pier substructure works continue to progress with no unexpected problems. They are still on track to complete in summer 2023.

A tender for improvements to the Pier bar servery and WC improvements has been let and the works have commenced. Works are now underway and on programme to complete in March 2023

The PC re-provision, including Changing Places Toilet Facilities, in Fakenham is making good progress following the resolution of the UKPN Cabl issue Works are expected to complete in spring 2023.

The Vicarage Street, North Walsham PC re-provisioning is in progress and demolition of the old facilities has been completed and the site cleared. The construction phase has commenced ks have been completed and rebuild works have commenced. The works are planned for completion in July.

Property Services have been tasked with completing the Cedars project and works are now in progress. Adam Laville now site based until completion, Works postponed at the Shambles until the spring. Alongside these works we are now working with Estates on the Black Swan Loke refurbishment.

The LED lighting improvement programme continues to progress well. Completed areas so far include The Council Chamber, Planning, Reception and Revenues/Benefits/HR & Finance service areas. Planning is now in progress for the remaining areas.

Fakenham Connect Crinkle Crankle wall remedial/safety works. Works have commenced and progressing as planned.

Morris Street car park boundary wall, storm damage repair. Works awarded and works in progress.

The Public Convenience re-provision at the Leas in Sheringham has been awarded but start delayed to allow the contractor to complete other already committed works in North Walsham.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Information Technology

Works to apply software patches across the IT estate to maintain cyber security and system availability will continue.

Continue with works in support of the District Council election in May.

Continue with "InTune" mobile device management software configuration and implementation.

Continue addressing Cyber Treatment plan as specified by DLUHCP

Complete the installation of the core switches and associated cabling works at Cromer offices as a part of the network technology refresh.

Investigate options for putting voice routing in the cloud to overcome obsolete equipment in the current arrangements.

Work will commence to support an audit of the Councils IT Disaster Recovery arrangements will commence.

Work beginning on server replacements for Outreach Web Forms as the server reaches end-of- life in the near future.

End of year process support will be a significant resource commitment during the coming period.

Customer Services

Towards the end of February 2023 the Revenues new year's billing will take place along with the Benefits department sending out award letters for the new financial year. This will result in another significant increase of residents contacting the council.

We will also be helping those residents that cannot provide suitable voter ID on election day to complete the VAC (Voter Authority Certificate) application to ensure their voice can be heard.

Environmental Services will be contacting garden bin subscribers who pay by direct debit advising them on the new pricing and the pending payment due to come out of accounts on the 1 April. Approximately 20,000 customers pay this way for the service, some of whom will undoubtedly will need to contact Customer Services regarding the service.

In March we will also be looking to start testing our new Customer Satisfaction survey system linked to our customer contact centre. This will provide the opportunity for customers whose enquiries were managed by the Customer Services team to rate our service and voice their opinions. The survey will cover four areas, how easy it they found it when contacting the council, how helpful they found the advisor who served them, how pleased they were with the advice they were given, and their overall experience with

us. We are looking forward to receiving their comments as this will provide us a real insight and enable us to improve our service delivery.

We have recently procured a pilot Chat Bot service to evaluate the effectiveness of the technology and to determine the best use for it. This technology can provide instant support and answers to customer queries and issues, 24/7 via our website. The overall objectives of a chatbot service are to improve efficiency, increase customer satisfaction, and drive business results. We are currently in the process of collecting training data for the chatbot. This data includes customer service enquiries, frequently asked questions, service descriptions, and other relevant information that the chatbot will need to understand. This will be in addition to existing customer contact channels and will not replace any existing channels.

Property Services

Legionella compliance tender is live.

Play equipment repairs and maintenance programme will be developed and implemented.

A winter programme of PC Repairs and maintenance will be delivered

3 Meetings attended