

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

21 February 2024

COUNCILLOR RINGER - CABINET MEMBER FOR IT, Environmental & Waste Services

For the period January to February 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Environmental Services

Officers are working with Serco to assess new collection rounds and feedback any concerns from officer knowledge. There has been a change to the disposal site (transfer station) for recyclables which has been factored into the redesign.

They are also supporting Serco comms to design and plan communications to residents around forthcoming round changes. Implementation for changes is on track for 8 April 2024.

Since being back to full staffing capacity, the team has heavily focused on ensuring Serco's cleansing standards for street cleaning and public toilets are where they should be.

We have appointed consultants Eunomia to undertake modelling of future collection options around the introduction of food waste collections in 2026. The capital funding allocations have been announced by DEFRA, the team have written to DEFRA outlining their concerns that the funding will not be adequate to cover the cost of receptacles and vehicles. Nationally and locally other LA's have also made similar representations.

Further cohorts of staff have been trained in health and safety (IOSH) – improving the knowledge and hopefully preventing accidents from occurring across the organisation.

The Corporate Health and Safety Officer has implemented a new system for assessing and monitoring health and safety of contractors the Council uses. This will ensure further compliance and reduce accidents.

Civil Contingencies

The winter weather continues to present challenges for the team, they have coordinated, prepared and responded to:

- High tides, coastal and river flood alerts

- Persistent flooding around Potter Heigham and the Broads
- Named storms Henk, Isha and Jocelyn

The team have negotiated an improved place of safety for Bacton Gas Terminal staff in the event of an incident requiring evacuation; this is to be included in the upcoming review of the Bacton Gas Terminal external COMAH Plan.

Ongoing liaison with the Environment Agency re flooding and new protocol re Potter Heigham flood board deployment. Attendance at the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance meeting at County Hall.

Public Protection

The team arranged with the voluntary closure of take away in North Walsham due to poor standards being identified during a routine inspection. The issues have now been rectified and premises reopened.

Takeaway in Honing, Police notified us that place was poor and may have illegal or trafficked people sleeping upstairs, not able to establish if people sleeping upstairs, but generally poor and rectification measures are being put in place.

The team responded to a multi-agency incident relating to a house explosion in Ashmanhaugh, it would appear that the explosion was caused by a badly installed pressurised water system, luckily no one hurt and the team have reported their findings to the Health and Safety Executive.

Officers are working with the FSA to establish a monitoring point for a prospective cockle bed, at Wells next the Sea. There are some challenges around this but the team are supporting this new business through their classification process.

The annual return for private water sampling has been submitted to the Drinking Water Inspectorate.

Environmental Protection

The team have undertaken equality and diversity training following a recommendation from the LGO. They will now proceed to implement some changes to our standard letters and processes to reflect their learning.

The annual air quality report has been submitted to DEFRA and will shortly be published on the website.

Complaints to the Private Sector Housing team have increased, these are mainly around excess cold and damp over the winter months, the team continue to work with landlords across the district to improve housing standards.

Working alongside the planning team on the planning validation to update the requirements for EH.

IT Infrastructure Team

- Finished the upgrading of the Network by replacing all the core switches over the Xmas break. This massive task has been undertaken without disruption to normal services. Thanks go to staff who gave up their Xmas holidays to do this.
- At the same time a data recovery exercise was undertaken, and all systems were run from the data recovery site at Fakenham from 27th to 30th Dec. Whilst we thought we had tested everything successfully. Members did report not being able to login during this period so we will undertake another test to find out why.
- All staff mobile phones are being updated so they continue to receive security updates.
- Supporting and supplying necessary equipment for the new Concerto App that Property Services will use when out on District.
- Old laptops have been given to County to be refurbished for disadvantaged people and the rest of our redundant equipment has been recycled.
- Cyber awareness training is continued to be pushed out bi-monthly but whilst awareness of threats has undoubtedly increased there is still a long way to go.
- The security on Council emails on personal phones has been increased and whilst it has caused some inconvenient disruption it has been necessary to make sure we are well protected.

IT Web Team

- Provided web functionality to enable PALC payments to be made at point of contact.
- New web servers fully commissioned and online – Test system finalised and completed.
- New version of Garden Bin management system completed and live.
- Ongoing updates for council web pages and intranet pages
- Ongoing additions for local plan examination libraries
- Publication of the Staff Survey

ICT Applications Support Team

- Planning mapping software moving from on-site to cloud based solution.
- PALC Pay Now functionality has now been enabled, resulting in an administrative saving. "Pay later" functionality is now disabled.
- Delivery of HMLR test extract dashboard. Awaiting project initiation but data cleansing now underway in preparation for this.
- Re-procurement of Planning Uniform software has led to substantial increase to our annual charge amounting to an additional £24K (total 68K). We have reprocured for a further three years.
- NNDC have been assigned a new account manager for the Civica Financials system. Hopefully now end-user issues and concerns can be addressed.
- Concerto property Services software has been updated to latest release.
- Substantial work has been undertaken to enable reporting on Planning Performance Measures.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

IT Infrastructure Team

- Members have reported that they cannot access Wi-Fi on trains. We have begun to investigate this in earnest and hopefully can come up with a better solution.
- Cyber Awareness training and exercises are ongoing.
- Vulnerability software will be run to give us a clearer picture of our security position and the results will form a program of work to remediate any weaknesses or systems out of date.
- Carrying on with the project of replacing mobile phones.
- Starting the process of procuring new servers.

IT Web Team

- In collaboration with ICT Applications and Network teams. Review of service desk outstanding incidents following recent audit report. Processes and procedures to be put in place to enable this to be effectively performance-managed going forward.

- Updates to Fly tipping reporting planned.
- Budget consultation form planned.
- Online form replacement system planning with Customer Services and C3.

ICT Applications Support Team

- Cloud-based Planning mapping software in LIVE use in about a month. Training has now been undertaken for administrators and end users.
- Project initiation to get underway to migrate land registry data to national database.
- Upgrade of Exacom section 106 software scheduled mid Feb.
- Revenues & Benefits year end to be main focus mid Feb – early Mar. Will require substantial out-of-hours working to minimize downtime for end users.
- Critical Resourcelink Payroll annual software release to be installed Feb 24. Timing unfortunate this year as will clash with revs/Bens year-end.
- Project underway to convert Pay360 our payment software to a cloud-based solution due to existing solution being decommissioned. Go-live Apr 24. Project team meeting weekly.
- Further upgrade of Uniform required to resolve fee bug.
- More members of team to attend Power BI training to meet anticipated organisational demand.
- In collaboration with ICT Web and Network teams. Review of service desk outstanding incidents following recent audit report. Processes and procedures to be put in place to enable this to be effectively performance-managed going forward.
- Environmental Health Annual License Fee Invoicing (using existing Commercial Waste interface) to be undertaken requiring bulk load of Licensing Customer data, with subsequent data cleansing activities. Keen to complete this in advance of departure of current Environment and Safety Manager.

Environmental Services

The re-route of waste collections is scheduled to go live on 8th April. Ahead of this a members briefing is to be held and all members are encouraged to attend. A date for this is shortly to be announced.

3 Meetings attended
Serco contact development and review board Norfolk Waste Partnership Regular meetings with officers related to portfolio matters