

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**27 March 2024**

### **COUNCILLOR L WITHINGTON - CABINET MEMBER FOR OUTREACH**

For the period February to March 2024

#### **1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**

With the approaching new financial year our colleagues around the council have been busy sending out notifications letters on the following:

- Annual Benefits award letters
- Annual Non-Domestic (Business) Rates bills
- Annual Council Tax bills
- Annual Trade Waste pricing
- Annual Beach Hut invoices

The above annual notifications result in thousands of letters and emails being sent and therefore we expect to see an increase in customer contact within the Customer Services team.

For the month of February, the average customer wait time when telephoning the Council was 3 minutes 31 seconds, and we're pleased to see that customers are still very happy with the level of service we are providing, achieving a 92% overall customer satisfaction level across all contact channels.

Our new chatbot has also been busy helping customers and we are continuously training it to response to as many questions as possible.

#### **2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.**

Environmental Services will shortly be sending out direct debit notifications to our Garden Bin customers around the district which undoubtedly will result in an increase in customer contact.

Our colleagues in IT Services have been working to create a new garden bin interface to allow Customer Services Advisors to quickly update customer records which we are hopeful will make this a more efficient service.

Over the coming months we will be also working with Electoral Services to prepare for the coming election in May. This will include training CSAs on new postal voting procedures so we are ready to answer questions from our residents.

Several members of the customer services team will unfortunately now see their fixed term contracts end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This will result in less resources within the team to maintain current service standards. However, we will endeavour to work with our colleagues around the council to find ways of continuing to provide great customer service and standards to our residents.