

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**17 November 2021**

### **COUNCILLOR L SHIRES - CABINET MEMBER FOR ORGANISATIONAL RESOURCES**

For the period September to November 2021

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

##### **Information Communications Technology**

Changes and enhancements being made to the IT infrastructure to support the move to the cloud for Microsoft software have continued. This includes MS Teams enhancements, email enhancements, security improvements and migrating the intranet to the cloud. The look and feel of the Intranet has also been refreshed. Work will continue to improve the functionality available on the intranet and its integration with Microsoft teams.

Laptops and other IT equipment have been rolled out to new starters. There are ongoing software patching of servers, pcs and laptops to ensure the IT estate remains as secure as possible. All our web forms are being updated to remain consistent with central government best practice guidance for web form look and feel. These are due to go-live by the end of November.

Vacancies in the Applications Management and Business System are currently being recruited following a number of staffing changes.

The IT team have developed the new call handling script for telephony elements of the Customer Services Call Centre software C3. The options menu has been significantly simplified and customers can talk to an agent much more quickly. An external web form and internal workflow based upon the Councils Workbench system has been developed to improve management and reporting of customer complaints. This will launch by December 1<sup>st</sup>

Work has continued on the upgrade of the Environmental Health system "Assure" including the ongoing rollout of automatically updated statutory registers. The Bulky Waste collections web form is now live which allows residents and businesses to book and pay for Bulky Waste collections 24/7.

A number of other web forms are approaching 'go live' including Food Registration, Food Hygiene Re-Inspection Booking and Benefits

#### Circumstances Change Notification.

The Tree Preservation Order register is now available as an online map based system improving access to the information which helps protect our local environment. The IT team has also provided support and assistance for the Online Greenbuild event.

The Council's asset management System "Concerto" has been upgraded.

A significant number of software patches have been applied to the Planning System "Uniform" including the Public Access components. A web form for reporting suspected breaches in planning control, to improve reporting and management of these issues has been developed and recently gone live.

Work continues to improve automated reporting on a variety of IT supported business processes through integration with the corporate reporting tool "InPhase".

Work to prepare and submit the zero based budget information has been completed.

#### **Customer Services**

Customer Services Week was celebrated at the beginning of October which saw great participation across the council with many of our staff being nominated by their colleagues as Customer Service Heroes! We asked customers and staff how they would like to be treated and promoted the "Service with Respect" campaign. We also let our residents know what we as a council are doing to improve Customer Services via a short video interview with the Customer Services Team Leader.

We have listened to feedback from our customers and the Automated Telephone System has been overhauled with the number of options dramatically reduced. Now only two options remain, to make a payment or speak to an advisor. This significantly shortens the time it takes to speak to a Customer Services Advisor. This change has been produced in line with the new CS strategy. We have already received positive feedback from many customers thankful to be speaking to a "real human" so quickly and we have also changed the on hold music, much to the relief of everyone.

We have seen face to face enquiries increase in numbers since July 2021 when lockdown restrictions began to ease. However, in comparison to the same period two years ago there is still a 58.7% reduction in face to face enquiries. We are exploring the reasons as to why our customers our visiting our offices and working to implement the concepts within the CS strategy to improve customer access to services across all channels.

Recruitment for fixed term contracts within the Digital Mailroom has been successful with an internal appointment and a return to the Digital Mailroom

for on staff member, and two further fixed term covers appointed The Digital Mailroom, like Customer Services has been a positive entry route into the organisation and we always support further development of colleagues. Two new starters will be joining the team during November.

Work to prepare and submit the zero based budget information has been completed.

### **Property Services**

Public convenience refurbishment works at Wells and Fakenham is progressing, with offsite construction of the new facilities continuing prior to installation and commissioning in the new year. Construction inflation continues to be a significant issue for all live and future works, we have seen a 12.5% increase on the current WC programme of works above. The Beach Huts and Chalet programme of works has commenced at Sheringham. The completion date is planned for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The Marrams Bowls Club and Fakenham Community Centre roof works are complete. Scoping and evaluation works continue at North Walsham Town Football Club in respect of significant remedial maintenance and facility improvements.

The Cromer offices LED programme is being reappraised, again due to increased costs. We are currently waiting for the revised specification and costings. It is likely that this will be carried out in two phases. The final installation and preparation works have been completed on the Electric Vehicle Charge Points at Bank Loke car park, North Walsham, we are awaiting a commissioning date from the third party operators.

The new Cromer Offices cleaning contractor, Rafters Ltd, continue to perform well. About With Friends, the canteen services at Cromer Offices have reported a reasonable increase in footfall since the end of the summer holidays. They have now added a hot soup option to their menu.

The contract for the Lusher's Passage upper storey conversion to Temporary Accommodation works in Sheringham has been awarded. Works will commence mid-November with a 12-week programme. The preparation work to remove asbestos have been completed. The work to commission additional Temporary Accommodation units and repair and maintenance of existing provision is ongoing and is a significant resourcing issue.

Asbestos removal and external drainage works are now complete in The Cedars, North Walsham. The works tender for refurbishment works is now live with a return date of 29<sup>th</sup> November. The property services works are now complete in Fairmeadow House, Itteringham and the furniture has been removed.

Work to prepare and submit the zero based budget information has been completed.

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

### **Information Communications Technology**

We are awaiting the intranet move to the cloud before Member iPads will be recalled to migrate them to Microsoft management software and Exchange online. This will happen towards the end of November.

After the network outage in October we are investigating as to why it happened and how we can mitigate any future similar issues by improving our Business Continuity arrangements.

Patching and Cloud migration, issuing new equipment and the Service Desk are ongoing activities.

### **Customer Services**

We will be introducing a new self-serve online booking system to allow our customers to book a face to face meeting with one of our advisors. This gives the option to the customer to select a more convenient time to visit our offices. We will also be introducing online video appointments should our customers wish to see an advisor without attending the offices.

We are looking to centralise and formalise current scanning for Building Control, utilising the current software within the Digital Mailroom to prepare for mobile device use in the future. This will enable effective and efficient mechanisms moving forward and bring Building Control in line with the current process for Development Control.

### **Property Services**

In addition to progressing existing project works and ongoing R&M a significant programme of out of season repair and maintenance works in Public Conveniences will commence.

### **3 Meetings attended**

Cabinet x 2  
Business Planning x 2  
Zero Based Budgeting workshops x 2

#### Portfolio

IT Portfolio meetings x 5  
Cllr Adams re: Cromer  
Cedar House  
Finance Briefing x 2  
Customer Services x 2  
Property Services x 2  
Organisational Resources x 2

#### Mental Health Champion

North Wellbeing Hub – CCG x 3  
North Norfolk Mental Health Joint Working Group – NSFT & CCG x 2  
Health Inequalities - CCG  
Healthier North Walsham – PCN NN2  
MHSTS Steering Group – CCG