

## BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

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| <b>From: Councillor Peter Patrick<br/>Cabinet Member for<br/>Organisational Delivery</b> | <b>Report Number: CMU7</b>            |
| <b>To: Council</b>   | <b>Date of meeting: 24 April 2018</b> |

### TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ORGANISATIONAL DELIVERY

#### 1. Overview of Portfolio

- 1.1 The Organisational Delivery Portfolio encompasses Customer Services, Business Improvement and ICT. Over the past 6-9 months, much of the work undertaken across these areas has related to the All Together programme of work including the move to Endeavour House and the delivery of in-person services from Sudbury customer access point. More recently following the move, we are now focused on building upon these changes, continuing to make incremental improvements on our day to day activities and progressing programmes of work supporting key priorities. Highlighted below is a summary of activity that has taken place across the three themes over the last few months.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 This report is for information.

#### 3. Key Activities/Issues Over the Past 6 – 9 Months

##### *Customer Services*

- 3.1 Following the implementation of the new customer telephony system Genesis at the end of March 2017, further back office calls were taken on by the customer services team, including Housing Repair calls and most recently Environmental Health enquiries. Significant training was undertaken to ensure that staff were able to answer queries accessing multiple IT systems. We are continuing to work with other services to identify opportunities for further team calls to be answered by our advisors.
- 3.2 Training and cross skilling of our staff has been taking place to ensure that we build resilience and capacity across the team. This is an on-going programme of work alongside refresher training to ensure that our staff are fully up to date. This is particularly important as we approach our busiest period of the year, with the posting of Council Tax, Benefits and Business Rate bills and notifications during March.
- 3.3 A review of our telephony opening times was conducted, with a different opening time trialled. Analysis of call volumes and abandonment rates informed a revised opening time of 8.45am.

- 3.4 Sudbury Town Council now provide our 'in person' customer services, ensuring that queries relating to Town, District and County enquiries are answered at our single point of contact. We continue to work very closely with Sudbury Town Council, ensuring that we provide up to date training and support for their staff.
- 3.5 All Customer Service staff were invited to team workshops during December 17. The aim of these was to encourage team building, now all customer service officers are based in one location. It was also used to capture feedback from the team as to how we can work more efficiently, and will help shape the refresh of our customer access strategy.
- 3.6 We have reviewed the messaging on our payment telephone lines. This has resulted in a shortened, more concise message when ringing the automated payment number. Through direct feedback we had identified an issue with customers caught in a messaging loop on some occasions; again we have reviewed the messages and given clearer guidance to improve the experience.

*Business Improvement including Policy & Performance, Data analysis and Programme Management*

- 3.7 The small Business Improvement team have continued to cope with a high workload. Despite having to deal with temporary staff shortfall where a skilled team member has been seconded in the holding company structure. It is, however good news that we are growing our own talent and promoting within the Council as appropriate. Interviews will shortly be taking place to fill the void that has been left. A prioritised focus has therefore been on the following:
- 3.8 Developing our Performance Framework – work has continued to ensure that our Councillor performance reporting is fit for purpose and provides assurances that we are delivering the JSP and performing well - Q3 performance data has been inputted into Connect for Councillors to access. A new internal performance dashboard is being developed for the Senior Leadership team to receive regular monthly reporting on the health of the organisation and in line with recently agreed priorities..
- 3.9 Seeking recognition through awards – following a submission by the team, we were recently shortlisted to the top three, from a record number of nominations, for the Working Together and Council of the Year categories in the 2018 Public Sector Transformation Awards run by iESE. The submission was based upon our move to Endeavour House; our Agile working and use of technology, the way in which we serve our customers and our partnership working. As you will now know, we achieved Silver placing in both categories at the awards ceremony in London on 6<sup>th</sup> March. This is a tremendous achievement by our staff.
- 3.10 Producing an End of Year Report – news stories, facts and figures have been collated across the organisation in readiness for a very different joint End of Year Report. Our communications team will be using this information to graphically produce visual representation of our greatest achievements during the last year. Work will soon start on an End of Term report which will feature digital elements also.
- 3.11 Researching & Data Analysis – the Overview and Scrutiny committee continues to be supported by the team with scoping and topic papers. In addition a wide range of research and analysis has been undertaken for various audiences.

Examples include: what the latest social mobility study means for the Councils, and the provision of local intelligence to feed into the 'One Council' business case.

- 3.12 Managing our Programmes and Projects - The team have been actively providing programme and project overviews, preparing an EQIA, writing a Transformation Fund bid, developing a business case and updating project plans. Alongside this, development work has commenced to improve the management, reporting and visibility of our programmes and projects, learning from others, and taking opportunities to strengthen our programme and project culture.
- 3.13 Investigating Stage 2 complaints – whilst continuing to provide an independent investigation of stage 2 complaints and improvements through lessons learnt, we have recently reviewed our internal complaints policy, including how we deal with persistent complainers and what constitutes a stage 2 complaint. This revised policy will be brought to Cabinet on 10 May and if approved will be followed by detailed guidance and a training programme. We have been experiencing an increase in the number of stage 2 complaints and the policy (and programme of work) will look to reduce these going forward.
- 3.14 Policy Development - In addition to the revised complaints policy, work has been undertaken on a high-level strategy for equality and inclusion with an accompanying action plan; and a fuel poverty strategy. Much research has gone into developing these, including working closely with key partners and organisations and ensuring strategic alignment. These will be coming before Councillors in due course.

#### *ICT*

- 4.0 Much of the activity in 2017 was driven by the move to Endeavour House and enabling staff to work in an agile way. Activity has included:

The set-up of a centralised scanning team, ensuring that incoming post is distributed electronically by email to relevant teams. Lately we have been working hard to ensure that the scanning team now scan all post received for the Councils. This helps ensure information received is retained in an electronic format and can be channelled to the correct team effectively.

Roll out of 'Skype for Business' for staff, enabling staff to make and receive calls from their laptops at home, in the office or out and about in the districts. Roll out of over 120 laptops to staff, so that they can work flexibly from any location. Touch Down points created across the district, providing multiple geographical locations for staff to work from, and access facilities such as printing and meeting rooms.

- 4.1 Following the move to Endeavour House, work has completed on de-commissioning the server rooms at Hadleigh, and remaining servers have been migrated to Constantine House.
- 4.2 Other transformation work has continued including:
  - Implementation of a joint planning system, enabling teams across Mid Suffolk and Babergh to integrate working practices.
  - Introduction of a new Council Committee Information system to better manage Council business.

- Installation of 'in vehicle' devices in our refuse lorries, to more efficiently collect up-to-the-minute rounds information, including missed bins.
- Upgrade of our Finance system and the transfer of our HR system to Suffolk County Council.
- On-going roll out of Office 2016 and Windows 10 to all teams, to keep abreast of latest software releases.

Whilst these projects have been implemented, work continues to ensure we make best use of the new functionality available

- 4.3 To ensure we provide an efficient service supporting agents and residents we are investing time enhancing and loading electronic data into our planning system. This enables us to search our records electronically and draw information out of our IT systems effectively. We have already reduced the number of days taken to search for information by 9 days.
- 4.4 New General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) come into force in May 2018. We are holding workshops with teams to help them understand the implications of these changes and the preparatory work that needs to be undertaken between now and May 2018. This involves reviewing how we handle and store customers' personal data. The implications of non-compliance include large fines as well as reputational damage and concern from customers over how we handle sensitive and personal information. We will also be sharing information with members in due course.

## **Conclusion**

- 5.0 Many of the activities noted above were the result of the All Together programme, and I would like to pay tribute to the members of the All Together Lead Group who, as staff, helped to progress particular themes of work, and, as members, maintained a watching brief throughout the project. Our Chief Executive, Arthur Charvonia, had to take over the leadership of the project at a difficult time last summer. Carl Reeder and the IT teams ensured that we continued to operate business as usual. Melissa Evans provided regular reports of the costs. Our external adviser, Pete Revell, masterminded the physical move and kept his nerve under often very testing circumstances.

Progress continues to be made across all teams, delivering day to day activities as well as projects and programmes supporting the Joint Strategic Plan. Over the coming months we will focus on some key corporate issues including the development of Connect and the website, enabling teams to work more efficiently in an agile environment, as well as ensuring high levels of day to day performance.