

## MID SUFFOLK COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

<b>From: Councillor Glen Horn Cabinet Member for Organisational Delivery</b>	<b>Report Number: <big>CMU14</big></b>
<b>To: Council</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 26 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. Following the move to Endeavour House and the consolidation of work streams under the All Together programme, we are now focused on building upon these changes. We are 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 Three Months

##### *Customer Services*

- 3.1 Further calls have been subsumed into the Contact Centre. Calls in respect of Environmental Health are now answered by our customer service advisors, providing a consistent and effective response. 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 All Customer Service staff were invited to team workshops during December 17. The aim of these, to encourage team building now all customer service officers are based in the one location, following the closure of Hadleigh & Needham Market HQ's. 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.

- 3.4 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*

- 3.5 The small Business Improvement team have continued to have a very high workload over this last period. Whilst a staff member has returned from maternity leave and one from secondment, activity has been hampered by a vacancy where a skilled team member has taken up a secondment in the holding company structure. It is fantastic that once again we can demonstrate that we are growing our own talent and promoting within the Council where appropriate. Interviews will shortly be taking place to fill the void that has been left. A prioritised focus has therefore been on the following:
- 3.6 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..
- 3.7 Seeking recognition through awards – following a submission by the team, we have recently received notification that we have been shortlisted in 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. I (Glen) will be attending an awards ceremony tomorrow in London (6 March) and will let everyone know of the outcome.
- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 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.

- 3.11 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 7 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.
- 3.12 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.

#### **4.0** *ICT*

- 4.1 Following the move to Endeavour House, work has completed on de-commissioning the server rooms at Hadleigh and Needham Market, and remaining servers have been migrated to Constantine House.
- 4.2 The scanning team has been reconfigured and are now able to scan all the post received, in respect of the Councils. This helps ensure information received is retained in an electronic format and can be channelled to the correct team effectively.
- 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.
- 4.5 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.

#### **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 Progress continues to be made across all teams, delivering business as usual as well as projects and programmes supporting the joint strategic plan. For some teams such as Customer Services we now enter our busiest period, with traditionally high volumes of contact. Over the coming months we continue to develop 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.