BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

From: Councillor Derek Davis – Cabinet Member for Organisational Delivery	Report Number: **CMU17**
To: Council	Date of meeting: 24 July 2018

TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ORGANISATIONAL DELIVERY

1. Overview of Portfolio

The Organisational Delivery Portfolio encompasses Customer Services, Business Improvement and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Over the past 3 months, we have focused on improving core performance, and making incremental progress on our day to day activities and projects. We have also worked hard to lay the foundations for future improvements, for example, by developing our team service plans and ensuring we have set objectives for the team and individuals. A summary of activity that has taken place across the three themes over the last few months follows.

2. Recommendation
2.1   That Council notes the report.

3. Key activities/issues over the past 3 months

Customer Services
Performance in quarter 1 remains good with customers waiting on average 1 minute 42 seconds for their call to be answered compared to an average 3 minutes for the same period last year. We have also increased the number of calls we answer and reduced the number of phone calls abandoned by customers; in April we answered on average 83% of calls, increasing to 86% in May and June.

3.1   We are continuing with our programme of staff development; building skills across our team so they can deal with different types of enquiries. This improves our resilience at busy times and gives our staff a greater variety of work. We now also have trained First Aiders, Fire Wardens and a Health and Safety representative in the Customer Services team.

3.2   Measuring our performance and gaining greater insight into why and how customers contact us is crucial to improving our services. We are currently piloting a customer satisfaction survey for our customers who call in person. Initial results are promising with (of those completing the survey), 94% of customers seen within 5 minutes or less, and 100% of customers rating us either good, very good or excellent in respect of the helpfulness of our staff, the information and advice provided and time taken to listen and to understand their query. We will learn from the pilot to help us develop a similar satisfaction survey for customers contacting us by telephone and through the website.

3.3   We are also developing a suite of customer standards which will set some minimum corporate expectations for how we will deal with customer enquiries. The first step has been to confirm that, in general (excepting specific requests e.g. Freedom of Information requests) customer enquiries are acknowledged within 24 hours of being received and that a substantive response should be provided to all enquiries within 5 working days of receipt (unless, where necessary, agreed differently with the customer).

4.   ***Business Improvement including Policy & Performance, Data Analysis and Programme Management***

The Councils achieved silver awards from the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE) in the categories of 'Best Efficiency' and 'Transformation Initiative' with a presentation attended by staff and Councillors on the 1st May at Endeavour House. We have submitted 2 entries to the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) and we will hear if we have been shortlisted by the 21st July.

4.1   During quarter 1 we have carried out independent investigations into 19 stage 2 complaints. In 4 cases the complaint was upheld and in a further 2 part upheld. In the same period last year we investigated 6 stage 2 complaints upholding 1 and partly upholding another. We have been considering revisions to our complaints policy to focus more on trying to resolve the issues raised by the customer at the first opportunity and where a formal complaint is made, the quality of the responses we provide at stage 1. The revised policy was presented to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny committee in May and will be considered by Cabinet in August. Councillors were also briefed in May on their role in dealing with housing complaints.

4.2   We have continued to provide insight and intelligence, to help inform a range of discussions, activities and projects. Examples have included: research to provide some key facts about the district; background information to accompany the 2017/18 Statement of Accounts; the collation of disability data to be used in discussion with the Government with regard to an 'Access for All' funding bid for Needham Market railway station; and an analysis of cheques processing, exploring options for reducing this method of payment.

4.3   The end of year outcome performance report was presented to Cabinet in June. Trend data was reported alongside highlights of key achievements, demonstrating that the Council is performing well overall. The performance framework continues to be developed and Cabinet members have been working with the Assistant Directors to refine the indicators and targets to reflect the priorities of the Council. The performance indicators for quarterly reporting to Cabinet have been agreed for 2018/19 and we are working to provide more context in the reports by using benchmarking data. The first of these revised reports will be presented to Cabinet in September.

4.4   Support has been provided to a range of organisational policy and strategies currently under development. A Policy Framework is currently being developed to ensure our strategies are aligned and fit with our strategic priorities.

4.5   The organisation has a wide range of projects and programmes particularly focused on the Council's priorities. Project support is provided to teams to develop project plans and monitor delivery against project milestones, as well as to compile funding bids and support task and finish groups. In this quarter examples include supporting a range of Public Realm projects, project management of the preparation of the 2017/18 statement of accounts resulting in publication one month earlier than previous years, and the facilitation of a 'natural work team' to develop the organisations values. In addition, we are providing the Senior Leadership team with a high level overview report to monitor progress on priority projects and work is underway to enhance our project management processes and governance.

5.   *ICT*

        We have introduced a Strategic and Operational ICT programme board with Suffolk County Council IT (SCC IT). This will ensure that we approve, monitor and develop our programme of ICT projects alongside Suffolk IT and can better manage the overall service our customers and staff receive. Our staff survey highlighted that we needed to improve communication about IT, as a first step, we are piloting a regular IT newsletter. This newsletter will summarise actions and progress reports from the new Programme boards, provide useful IT hints and tips, and give a round-up of what's new across the organisation in terms of IT.

5.1   We have set up a project group to understand why users are having differing ICT experiences when working from home and consider ways to improve this. The project group consists of officers from across our Councils as well as from Suffolk County Council IT. Most staff and Councillors are able to work freely from home. However we are experiencing some issues with older legacy applications, and we are working with SCC IT to either upgrade these as soon as possible or find suitable alternative workarounds.

5.2   The performance of the SCC IT support desk has been improving throughout the quarter. During April, SCC IT took on average 2 minutes 55 seconds to answer IT related support calls, but this reduced to 2 minutes 38 seconds in May, and to 1 minute 42 seconds in June. In total (all SCC IT customers) the IT support desk answered over 8455 calls during the quarter. 735 incidents (issues/problems) and 712 additional service requests were raised from Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils during this period. A total of 28 Babergh Councillors raised 56 incidents and service requests, nearly half of which concerned the upgrading of laptops.

5.3   Our current performance for Land Charge search times is 10 days. We are continuing to enhance and load more accurate data into our planning system so that we can search our records electronically and draw information out of the system more efficiently. Our current focus is enforcement cases past and present, digitising the information and automating as much as possible.

5.4   We are working on a number of updates and upgrades to current core IT systems. This includes an upgrade to the Environmental Health system, which in the long term will enable us to roll out a mobile tablet solution, and a trial of software in the Development Management planning team which will provide an effective traffic light system to help manage workload more efficiently. Finally, we are upgrading the Uniform planning software, to ensure it works more efficiently with our telephony system.

5.5   The new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into force on the 25 May 2018. We have delivered an intensive training programme to staff and Councillors, as well as updating all relevant web pages with our privacy notices. We are currently reviewing our contracts to ensure that where we are working with external suppliers to ensure we have robust processes in place to ensure the right levels of data protection are in place.

6.   *Conclusion*

We continue to make progress and improve performance across all of our teams. Over the next few months we will focus on developing the actions and communication plans to implement our Customer Strategy. We will also identify improvements to be made in response to the Staff Survey and develop both corporate and directorate level action plans to deliver these.