

## MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

<b>From: Cabinet Member for Organisational Delivery</b>	<b>Report Number: CMU22</b>
<b>To: Council</b>	<b>Date of meeting: 26 July 2018</b>

### 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, supplemented by additional information related to Communication key stories.

#### 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 and the facilitation of a 'natural work team' to develop the organisation's 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 20 Mid Suffolk Councillors raised 49 incidents and service requests, nearly a quarter of these were in respect of upgrading 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. **Communications**

*Annual Summary* - A new-style end of year summary was produced by the Communications Team working in partnership with the Business Improvement Team. This highlighted the Councils' key achievements during 2017/18 in the form of infographics aligned to the Councils' Joint Strategic Plan. The summary also assisted Councillors attending the annual meetings of their Town and Parish Councils.

6.1 *Monthly communications evaluation reports* - Previously, no evaluation of the effectiveness of the Councils' communications was carried out. Processes have now been put in place to enable the impact of communications activities to be monitored and assessed. These monthly evaluation reports, starting from April 2018, are circulated to all Councillors.

6.2 *District facts* - The Communications Team and the Business Improvement Team have worked together to compile a fact sheet, which aims to highlight some of the key facts regarding each district, through a collection of timeless key statistics, illustrated by infographics.

### 6.3 **Key Stories**

*iESE award presentation* - There was significant external and internal communication in relation to the presentation of the iESE Public Sector Transformation Awards to Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils for 'Council of the Year' and 'Working Together'. The Chief Executive of the awarding organisation (iESE) came to Suffolk to personally present the awards to the Councils. The judges were so impressed with the Councils' submission for the 'Working Together' award that they entered Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils into the overall 'Council of the Year' award as well. Working with the Business Improvement Team we have submitted a further 2 entries to APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) and we will hear if we have been shortlisted by 21 July 18.

6.4 *Stars of Babergh and Mid Suffolk Awards* - The Communications Team co-ordinated the launch of the Stars of Babergh and Mid Suffolk Awards on 1 June in Brome. Nominations are open for the awards which have 17 categories split between community awards and business accolades. The closing date is 28 September and nominations can be made via the website of the East Anglian Daily Times, which is part of Archant, our media partner for the awards. The awards ceremony will be held in Hadleigh during October.

6.5 *Future plans for former council headquarters* - Extensive communications support has been provided for the two public engagement events on future plans for Mid Suffolk District Council's former headquarters site in Needham Market. Council representatives and consultants answered questions and discussed the plans at the exhibitions.

- 6.6 *Suffolk Day* - On Suffolk Day, councillors launched this year's Locality Funding, inviting community groups, charities and organisations to apply for a share of £6,250, that each councillor has to award to projects or organisations that support local people. The Communications Team also promoted two walks being held in the district as part of the Suffolk Day celebrations in Needham Market and Eye.
- 6.7 *Vision for prosperity Stowmarket* - The Stowmarket Vision for Prosperity Action plan was launched as part of the Stowmarket Society's Civic Day. The public were invited to a drop-in session to look at the plans for investment which are proposed to improve the town centre and boost the local economy.
- 6.8 *Re-election of Chairman* - Following the re-election of Cllr Derrick Haley to serve as Chairman of the Council, work is underway to promote the Chairman's chosen charities. Cllr Haley presented cheques totalling £1,920 to two local charities following last year's fundraising, split equally between Suffolk Family Carers, based in Claydon and the Museum of East Anglian Life in Stowmarket. Cllr Haley has chosen to support Suffolk Mind during his second year as chairman.
- 6.9 *OVO Energy Women's Tour* - This international sporting event passed through Mid Suffolk, including a sprint in Needham Market. A series of events organised by the Council in partnership with local communities were held to celebrate and these were promoted alongside live coverage of the cyclists on social media.
- 6.10 *Internal communications campaigns* – A range of activities and information was provided during Mental Health Awareness week in May. Extensive work was also carried out to raise awareness and prepare for the introduction of the General Data Protection regulations on 25 May 2018.

## 7. **Conclusion**

We continue to make progress across all of our teams, improving performance. Over the next few months we will focus on developing our action and communication plans from the Customer Strategy. We will also be identifying improvements to be made from the results of the Staff Survey which will be captured in both corporate and directorate level action plans. In terms of Communications' activity we are working closely with staff and councillors to increase awareness of the Council's positive work, initiatives and services. A recruitment process has also recently been carried out to add capacity to the Communications team and introduce a full business partner model, with an emphasis on delivering fully integrated media, marketing and digital campaigns.