

MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

From: Councillor Suzie Morley, Cabinet Member for Customers, Digital Transformation & Improvement	Report Number: CMU4
To: Council	Date of meeting: 26 September 2019

TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMERS, DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION & IMPROVEMENT

1.0 Overview of Portfolio

1.1 The Customers, Digital Transformation & Improvement Portfolio encompasses Customer Services, Business Improvement, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Communications. Since May we have been preparing a number of key projects that will have an impact upon the organisation over the coming months including a Customer Transformation Programme, as well as improving core performance and business as usual activity. A summary of activity that has taken place across the four teams over the last few months is as follows.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 That Council notes the report.

3.0 Key activities since May 19

3.1 ***Customer Services***

3.2 The performance from Q1 to Q2 has improved by 1% with regards to average calls being answered, from 85% in the 2 month period May and June, to 86% across July and August. August has been our strongest month, meeting our target of answering 90% of calls.

3.3 In Q1 52% of our calls were answered in 30 seconds and already for Q2 we have increased to 58% of our calls being answered in 30 seconds.

3.4 Our average waiting time has reduced from an average of 1 minute and 56 seconds in Q1 to 1 minute 42 seconds, on average in Q2. A telephony survey was carried out over May-August and of the 806 customers who responded they rated our service 9.7 out of 10.

3.5 Over Q1 and Q2 we have seen 1,991 customers across Stowmarket, Sudbury, Shotley and Hadleigh and of those customers they have rated us 9.5 out of 10 for levels of customer service.

3.6 We have also recently implemented a new feedback system called “Contact Us”. We have launched this with our internal teams in August and Shared Revenues Partnership will go live from September. This system allows all compliments and complaints to be stored electronically, which will support us to produce more meaningful data. This will mean we can learn from and understand customer feedback in more detail.

4.0 *Business Improvement*

- 4.1 Following recommendation by Council, Cabinet approved an Equality and Diversity Policy which overarches a range of tools and guidance; mandatory Councillor equality induction training has been provided along with additional training for officers, interns and graduates, and relationships have further developed with protected characteristic groups, improving engagement around council activity. Additional training dates will be provided over the coming weeks and all those who missed the training are encouraged to attend a future date.
- 4.2 Performance reports for Q4 2018/19 and Q1 2019/20 have been provided to Cabinet and have continued to evolve through discussions with Cabinet Members. Reports for both periods painted a positive picture with clear actions identified for those few areas requiring performance improvement. In addition the team have provided the Senior Leadership Team with a range of performance housekeeping reports including information enabling them to pro-actively manage sickness, mental health and other absences.
- 4.3 A dedicated Corporate Programme Manager has been employed; a range of Project Management Tools and support mechanisms have been designed and there is greater visibility of project activity. Programme Boards are in the process of being set up in line with the Councils' priorities which will ensure robust governance with effective project management and monitoring.
- 4.4 In the period up to 22 August 2019, in respect of Mid Suffolk eleven stage 2 complaints have been received; 7 were not upheld, 1 fully upheld, 1 partially upheld and 2 are still under investigation. This period sees a positive improvement on the same period in the previous year with sixteen stage 2 complaints received; 5 fully upheld and 3 partially upheld.
- 4.5 With respect to Babergh for the same period, nine stage 2 complaints have been received, 7 were not upheld, 1 fully upheld and 1 partially upheld. This period sees a slight improvement on the same period in the previous year with ten stage 2 complaints received; 1 fully upheld and 1 partially upheld.
- 4.6 As a result of the analysis of upheld and partially upheld complaints additional staff training has taken place, procedures have been updated, record keeping has been improved and expected standards and procedures have been reiterated.

- 4.7 The Local Government Ombudsman issued their 2018/19 report. They completed two detailed investigations for Mid Suffolk and upheld one of these. For comparative purposes, in 2017/18 the LGO carried out three detailed investigations and upheld two of them.

The LGO completed four detailed investigations for Babergh during 18/19 and upheld none of these. For comparative purposes, in 2017/18 the LGO carried out three detailed investigations and upheld one of them.

5.0 ***ICT***

- 5.1 Following feedback from Councillors and customers' we have implemented a new search facility on our websites. By analysing past and previous search terms we have seen an improved accuracy match from 45% to 95%. We are continuing to monitor and improve the search functionality further to improve our customers' experience.
- 5.2 One Drive for Business is the latest file storage technology and has been rolled out to all Councillors and staff, replacing the home directories with online storage. This means we can access files from any internet connected device, including our mobile phones. The new functionality also allows users to share files more easily, ensuring a more efficient way of collaborating.
- 5.3 The Environmental Health system (M3) has been updated, which will enable us to use a web based system and staff to use mobile devices to access information whilst out in the field.

6.0 ***Communications***

- 6.1 An all staff event was held on the 9th July "Navigating our Future". This was an opportunity to share our direction of travel, learn a few new things about other service areas, and understand our values, as well as an opportunity to network with other colleagues. Feedback collected on the day confirmed that 82% of attendees found the event useful or really useful, 83% said they learnt something new and 93% said they met/spoke to someone they didn't usually work with.
- 6.2 The team have supported the setup and administration of new functionality which means some Council meetings can be live streamed on the Councils' YouTube accounts. Within the last quarter meetings have been viewed 2,393 times whether live streamed or watched on demand.
- 6.3 The team have also delivered a number of campaigns and messages to support business as usual activities as well as answer the enquiries. This includes live coverage of our Elections, material to support the Joint Local Plan consultation, development of the Visions for Prosperity and proactive communications produced in relation to CIFCO business plan and Gateway 14.

7.0 Future Key Activities

- 7.1 During the autumn we will be refreshing our Stowmarket customer access point with tablet self-serve points to support customers to access services through our website. We will also be installing a hearing loop to support our customers who require additional support to communicate with our officers.
- 7.2 We have been drafting a Customer Service charter which will provide a common set of standards for the organisation to adhere to; this will be launched in the autumn.
- 7.3 A training plan will be rolled out ensuring that the organisation has the right programme and project skills in place, and additional Programme Boards will be set up to support the organisation's key strategies and priorities, ensuring effective delivery through robust project management. The team will continue to support projects throughout the project cycle.
- 7.4 The management of Stage 2 complaints will now sit within the Customer Operations team and they will continue to monitor, seek resolution and learn from the complaints received.
- 7.5 A range of Planning teams and Building Control will be implementing a new mobile apps facility which will provide teams with information onsite. This will enable us to improve site inspection processes and make efficiencies, including reduction in duplication of data entry.
- 7.6 Planned Communications activity will focus on some corporate wide priorities including roll out of our Customer Charter during Customer Service week (7-13 October), supporting information for the Staff Survey, next stages of the Joint Local Plan delivery and Visions for Prosperity. Gateway 14 and the development of the former Needham Market HQ will also feature in respect of Mid Suffolk, and for Babergh will include Belle Vue consultation and the Leisure capital works programme.