

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL - CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

TO: Council	REPORT NUMBER: CMU2
FROM: Cllr Alastair McCraw, Cabinet Member for Customers, Digital Transformation and Improvement	DATE OF MEETING: 23 January 2023

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

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an update to Babergh District Council on Portfolio activities. This update focusses on 3 key areas; demand management in customer services, our digital platform project and our new corporate programmes.

2. UPDATE

Demand Management

- 2.1 The Customer Contact Centre experienced higher levels of demand in 2022 when compared to 2021. Most notably a 7%, or 8,601 increase in calls and a 19% increase in e-mails. These increases have been driven predominately by the energy rebate payments and an increase in housing repair calls.
- 2.2 This higher demand, coupled with an increase of officers leaving to take up other job opportunities across the organisation, has had an impact on performance. Average wait times and abandon rates during this period have been higher than 2021 with an average wait time of 4 minutes and 43 seconds and abandon rate of 24% during 2022.
- 2.3 To help manage the demand, we have explored other opportunities alongside backfilling vacant positions. We are currently recruiting three apprentice positions to help us develop a talent pipeline in customer services. These roles will be undertaking qualifications in business improvement techniques, to support with business process reengineering and digital content, to support with improving our digital services from a customer perspective, in line with our digital platform project.
- 2.4 In 2023 we will also be trialling the use of live chat, to provide our customers with an opportunity to interact with an officer via secure online typed messages during our normal office opening hours. This will be a controlled trial of 3 officers, to explore the impact of live chat on our demand and customer satisfaction.
- 2.5 We are recruiting a process improvement officer post to help accelerate our capacity to undertake process reviews across the organisation to reduce failure demand and improve customer satisfaction.

2.6 In addition to the above, and as part of our Digital Platform project, we are undertaking a review of our web content to ensure that all customer journeys (from information provision through to fulfilment) are easier to use. This ease of use will help us to reduce failure demand.

Digital Platform

2.7 We want to ensure that all customers receive high quality services and support. The digital platform project will support us to deliver these aspirations.

2.8 The digital platform is our project for replacing our websites, online forms and exploring how we harness the power of digital to create seamless online experiences for our customers.

2.9 We selected a partner supplier in late September 2022 to help us to deliver this work.

2.10 Placecube, the successful supplier, provides a low code platform with a community ethos where all development on the platform is shared across partners, to ensure 'the public sector never pay twice'.

2.11 Together with the supplier we have been working up a joint plan, with the website replacement taking priority.

2.12 To support delivery of new and updated content across the new websites we recruited 53 customer journey champions from across the organisation to help review our current website content from a customer perspective before re-writing and placing on our new more modern platform.

2.13 We aim to have completed our initial build of our websites by April 2023 and will take an iterative approach to their ongoing improvement, refining the sites, using customer feedback to improve our customer experience.

2.14 Our longer-term plans include reviewing our online customer forms, using business process re-engineering to ensure our highly used forms are improved using the new platform integrations and workflow capabilities, our key processes will be available to customers from the summer of 2023.

Programme Management Office and Corporate Programmes

2.15 The need to continuously improve service, manage demand and meet our financial challenges whilst also achieving our strategic outcomes has guided the identification of 5 potential corporate programmes. This portfolio of programmes will change the way we work, helping us to deliver the best possible services to the people of Babergh.

2.16 These potential programmes are:

Programme Name	Senior Responsible Officer
Data	Sara Wilcock
Climate Change	Fiona Duhamel

Efficiency and Change	Sara Wilcock
People	Kathy Nixon
Wellbeing for Communities	Di Robinson

- 2.17 Senior Responsible Officers are currently in the process of developing Programme Briefs and individual programme governance, alongside further and more granular development on the activities the programmes will undertake to deliver their strategic aims.
- 2.18 The Programme Management Office is developing appropriate governance and reporting mechanisms to support transparency and delivery of these programmes within our existing operating models.
- 2.19 Further information around Programmes will be made available during quarter four of FY 2022/23.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Council notes the report.