

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

12 April 2018

COUNCILLOR MRS KATHY MELLISH - CABINET MEMBER FOR FACILITIES AND ICT

For the period 23 February to 12 April 2018

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

It's that time of year again when the annual council tax bills have been posted. This always generates additional calls to the Council Information Centre (CIC) having an additional stream of questions and they are therefore very busy responding to these queries. On the busiest day, call volumes increased by 168% compared to same day the week before (5th March 279 council tax enquiries received and 749 on the 12th March). The CIC received a large number of calls from customers mainly about the overall increase, although there were more enquiries in respect of the way in which the increase in the Adult Social Care portion of the bill had been calculated and displayed on the bill. This was a format which was prescribed by Central Government and which County had no discretion over either but did cause a significant number of enquiries. It is always very difficult for us as the collecting agency as it is thought we are the main reason for any increase, but the CIC staff are ready each year and can explain how the bills are made up. Sometimes as you pass the team and catch the conversation you could be forgiven for considering a recorded message might be useful at this time of year....

Over the main billing period, an average of 43 new 'MyAccount' accounts were created by customers utilising our digital services platform. 44% of these were created out of office hours which indicates that a good proportion of potential enquiries were resolved by the customers themselves. It also shows that many people conduct their business out of hours from the normal 9-5 so the necessity of the website and getting it right is very important, e-forms especially which is something the team are working hard to ensure are fit for purpose.

The medical implant recycling initiative we have with the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management has for the first time been able to award a double refund so we are very pleased to be able to offer a donation to two worthwhile causes shortly. Our first cheque will be for Alzheimer's Society Norfolk and Suffolk branch toward the end of April and our second is still being organised so details to follow.

I was pleased to attend the official opening of the new ground floor and welcome the DWP/JCP team to King's Court on 28 March. It is a very good example of joint working with efficiencies for all parties to include sharing of space, facilities, infrastructure and staff.

It must be mentioned that this was a very time-consuming venture and involved endless officer input for planning and management of the project however not withstanding the usual last minute issues it has come together on time so thank you to all who were involved in this and your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

Since the last report Chris Black has started in his role as the new Cemeteries and Crematorium Manager. He has a high bar already set by David Clayton who should be thanked for his years of service and the high standard he set for his role at the Council. I have met with Chris and am very interested in seeing where his thoughts may be for the future of the department once he has been able to work through the first few months to get a good idea of what may be issues or actions that he would like to investigate further.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Regular meetings with Officers and Executive Directors

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Officer meetings
Cabinet meeting and Portfolio updates
Official Opening of the new DWP office and Ground Floor facilities
ICT Development Group
Joint Employee meeting
Cabinet Sifting