

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

26 January 2023

COUNCILLOR HARRY HUMPHREY- CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES

For the period 1 December 2022 to January 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

In my last report, I outlined the effectiveness and working of the CIC. At the CPP Meeting on 4th January, there was, I thought, an impressive and informative presentation on the performance of the Centre by the CIC Manager. I asked for a summary which is below.

The Council Information Centre (CIC) consists of 24 members of staff who deal with telephone, face-to-face and digital enquires relating to 14 different borough council services.

The CIC has responded to over 75,000 telephone calls (69.4% within 90 seconds), over 5,000 web chats (86% preventing the need to call the CIC) and over 9,000 enquiries at Main Reception.

This year has been particularly busy for the CIC with the introduction of the £150 energy rebate scheme, a 54% increase in Council Tax enquiries and enquiries from residents struggling with the cost of living. In addition to responding to customer enquiries, the CIC has also supported colleagues in the Revenues and Lily teams to process energy rebate and DWP Household Support Fund applications.

The CIC works very closely with Communications and the Corporate Web team to ensure the information provided on the website is correct, assists with social media enquiries, builds online forms and keeps up to date on what's happening in the borough. The digital services provided enable residents to access borough council services 24/7 which helps to free time for the CIC to help residents who do not have online access or have more complex enquiries.

At the CPP meeting, there was also an impressive and informative presentation from the Web Team Manager. Again, I asked for a summary, and the main points are below.

- The Web Team manages a digital estate of 16 websites and supports services such as our citizen account platform (OneVu), Live Chat, online forms and a whole range of other systems, often developed in-

house to meet our own specific requirements.

- The demand for digital services is greater than ever. We had over 2 million visits to west-norfolk.gov.uk website for the 2021/22 period, an increase of over 13% on the previous year and a 108% increase on 2018/19 levels.
- Our digital services play an important role in delivering services, communicating with our residents and helping meet our corporate priorities. Our website allows us to serve our customers 24/7, 365 days a year in a cost-effective manner. A very recent example of this is the bin day collection webpage receiving over 50,000 page views for the period when the Council offices were closed over the Christmas.
- The Web Team consists of four members of staff but currently has two vacancies for developers due to staff moving onto new roles outside the organisation. One of those posts has been vacant since May 2022 and this has put the team under considerable pressure.
- Despite these pressures on the team, two new websites (Sail the Wash and Visit West Norfolk) have been delivered to promote West Norfolk as a tourist destination and three new websites (Alive West Norfolk, Care and Repair and King's Lynn Innovation Centre) will be launching soon. Also, a project to redesign the Council's intranet will be starting shortly to support our Internal Communications Review.
- It is hoped to fill the two vacant developer positions early in the new year and plans are being made to ensure the Council's digital services remain in a strong position even with the challenges faced.

There was also a very good presentation from the Communications Team (which falls outside my Portfolio).

I think it could be helpful for all members to view the YouTube recording of that CPP meeting to see these informative presentations.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Further meetings with officers and visits to gain further insights into the portfolio, but the current focus will be budget considerations

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Council
Portfolio review of reserves
Cabinet briefings
Cabinet Sifting

Portfolio briefings

CPP (YouTube)

Other meetings are expected to cover areas of the portfolio and budget considerations.