

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Subject: Customer Services Portfolio**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor S Kane**

---

**Recommending:**

**That the report of the Customer Portfolio Holder be noted**

---

1 The period since my last Council report has been the busiest of the year for some areas of the Customer Directorate. The Electoral Services team along with other colleagues within the Council, including the Corporate Communications team successfully administered two major polls, namely the Local Elections on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2019 and the European Elections closely following on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019, along with the subsequent count processes. The close proximity of the elections provided a challenge for everyone involved which they handled admirably.

2 The Corporate Communications has also played a key role in supporting the Local Plan hearings and the webcasts helped ensure that as many people across the district can view proceedings and provide as open and transparent process as possible. The webcast views as of 17<sup>th</sup> July were:

- 32 sessions webcast over 7 weeks
- Duration of sessions webcast is 88 hours 59 mins
- 4,685 views (webcast played for a min of 1 min)
- 2,929 viewers
- Total viewing time to date of 3,107 hours 19 mins

3 Recent months has seen the rollout of new i-pads to Members to help eliminate the use of paper and reduce cost along with the rest of the organisation. I recognise that there have been and continue to be some challenges with the transition away from paper. I am pleased to say that I have been able to provide a solution to Members to enable Council e-mails to be accessed via their personal mobile phones that complies with Public Sector Network Code of Communications (PSN Co-Co) requirements. This is an action arising out of the Internal Audit report on how personal data is shared with Members. Without this compliance the Council is essentially precluded from sharing data with other public sector organisations and would not be able to fulfil its statutory obligations.

4. I recognise that the move to 'Digital Members' is one that will evolve to ensure that we can work in a modern and flexible way. There will remain officer support for Members who require on-going help to the use of the devices and applications, and this can be arranged by contacting Member Support within the Customer team. I am confident that we can join the rest of the organisation in the overall digital transition and the benefits this will bring in the future.

4. The Digital Inclusion project is proceeding well, and the draft report and recommendations have been received from Citizens Online about future priorities in this area. I hope to be able to share the findings with Members in the near future.

5. The implementation of a new Corporate Debtors system has commenced and is on target for the planned implementation date of December 2019.

6. Work is now commencing to merge Benefits customer contacts into the Revenues customer team to provide a generic solution for customers. Once this process has been completed it is planned for this team to merge with the Corporate Customer Contact Team by the end of this financial year.

7. The current Capita contract for Revenues and Benefits is due to expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. Renegotiations are underway looking at options around a cloud-based solution. This is also being referred to the wider work the consultants ITICA to assess the benefits of cloud-based solutions for the Council on a corporate basis. A report regarding the Revenues and Benefits is still planned for Cabinet in December 2019.

5. The recruitment into the management positions within the Customer Directorate is progressing with appointments being made into Team Manager and remaining Service Manager positions. I am please to announce the following recent appointments:

- Susan Lewis - Customer Service Manager;
- Tom Carne – Corporate Communications Manager;
- Nikki Gambrill – Customer Service Team Manager;
- Gaynor Atkinson – Revenues Operations Team Manager;
- Gary Ayres – Corporate Debt Team Manager;
- Lynn Smith – Compliance Team Manager;
- Lorraine Martin – System and Contracts Team Manager.