

Agenda Item No:	8	
Committee:	Overview & Scrutiny	
Date:	27 February 2023	
Report Title:	Progress in Delivering the Transformation and Communication Portfolio 2022-2023	

Cover sheet:

1 Purpose / Summary

This report sets out the Council's progress in delivering the Transformation and Communication portfolio.

2 Key issues

Particular successes are:

- 104 press releases published between 01 April 2022 and 31 January 2023.
- Increased popularity of the Council's Social Media Channels. We now have 6,459 followers on Facebook and 8,851 on Twitter.
- Providing vital communications messages on key corporate projects including
 - March Future High Street Fund
 - Business Plan and Budget
 - Annual Report
 - Transforming the Council projects
 - Cost of Living Campaign
 - Fenland Railway Station Masterplans
 - Garden waste subscriptions
 - Wisbech High Street Project
- Supporting key corporate consultations including
 - Draft Business Plan & Budget
 - Local Government Boundary Commission
 - Tax Tarff Consultation
 - Housing Enforcement
 - March Railway Station Redevelopment
 - Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan
 - Draft Local Plan
 - Polling District Review

- Progress of the Better Online Services Council for the Future project and development of online transactions.
 - Over 274,000 website hits between 01 April 2022 and 31 January 2023.
 - Over 17,500 online forms completed, and 5 new online forms launched.
 - Fenland For Business website relaunched, with new content and hosted on the FDC website.
- Progress of the Modernising Council Services Council for the Future project, in particular the transformation project and improved customer experience.
 - Creation of new My Fenland team, new structure, roles, and training plan.
 - 67 new and existing processes mapped, and 11 processes redesigned.
 - We continue to offer an appointment scheme for customers who still want to access council services face to face. We provide an enhanced individual service with a member of staff trained to deal with their query.
- Delivery of a suite of ICT projects which are seeking to modernise service delivery across the Council.
 - All office-based staff have been enabled for hybrid working, where required.
 - ICT infrastructure has been appropriately upgraded / replaced to ensure performance, reliability, availability, and security.
 - 94% of ICT users have completed our improved user education programme in cyber security and information management.

3 Key Areas of Focus for 2023

- Continue to promote all Council communication and consultation projects to staff, members, residents and businesses highlighting news, events, Council services, and information.
- Building on the achievements of the Better Online Services project and developing our website and suite of online services to enable our residents and customers to self-serve where applicable.
- Building on the achievements of the Transformation Project, we are now developing phase 3, which is an organisational wide transformation.
- Continue the delivery of ICT projects which are seeking to modernise service delivery across the Council.

4 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Panel considers the progress made in delivering the Transformation and Communication Portfolio during 2022 - 2023.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	

Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Steve Tierney, Portfolio Holder for Transformation & Communication
Report Originator(s) And Contact Officer (s)	Peter Catchpole - Corporate Director Anna Goodall - Assistant Director Stephen Beacher - Head of ICT, Digital and Resilience David Wright - Head of Policy and Communications
Background Paper(s)	

Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Progress Against the Transformation & Communications Priorities

**For performance from
1st April 2022 to 31st January 2023**

Portfolio Holders



**Councillor
Chris Boden**
Leader of the Council



Councillor Steve Tierney
Portfolio Holder for
Transformation,
Communication &
Environment

Quality Organisation

Communications Projects

The team supports all Council services with a wide range of internal and external communication projects. Support is tailored to the requirements of the project or service. For key services, we also hold monthly communications meetings.

Some of the large projects we support will include developing communications plans, consultation and engagement plans, promotional design work (logos, documents, leaflets, social media assets, posters etc.) and printing materials. These projects can run over a longer period of time and will involve an extensive project plan.

Key communications projects include:

- March Future High Street Fund
- Business Plan and Budget
- Annual Report
- Transforming the Council projects
- Cost of Living Campaign
- Fenland Railway Station Masterplans
- Garden waste subscriptions
- Wisbech High Street Project

We also offer support for 'everyday' communications. These include projects that need external communications (a press release, web page and programme of social media posts), or marketing materials (logo, document, poster or leaflet).

These projects include:

- Active Fenland programme
- Recycling projects/Getting it Sorted project
- Fenland for Business projects
- Community support projects (i.e. Grants available, Community Safety Partnership projects)
- Street Pride events
- Commercial Investment Strategy
- Hereward Community Rail Partnership projects

Consultation

In line with our Corporate Consultation Strategy, we support teams to engage and consult with residents about Council services.

We offer advice in ensuring that all consultations are well planned and prepared

ensuring consistent communication messages.

Also, a consistent process allows the consultation to give clear results and therefore, help inform future decisions.

Teams are supported by the communications team with assistance through questionnaire development, design and printing of associated posters and surveys, and a communications plan to publicise the consultation.

Key consultations included:

- Draft Business Plan & Budget
- Local Government Boundary Commission
- Tax Tarff Consultation
- Housing Enforcement
- March Railway Station Redevelopment
- Whittlesey Neighbourhood Plan
- Draft Local Plan
- Polling District Review

Policy

The Policy & Communications team continue to support the development of Corporate Policy. Over the past 12 months we have developed the Business Plan (and related consultation), Service Planning templates and the Annual Report for the organisation.

In addition, we provide advice on corporate performance reporting and demographics to all teams across the organisation.

Press Releases / Media

We continue to use a clear and positive approach to all media and press releases to promote the good work of the Council.

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 January 2023, we have publicised 104 Press Releases.

All press releases are published on both the front page and news and events sections of our FDC website. They are also published on our FDC social media accounts, Facebook and Twitter. In addition, all press releases are distributed to local news

outlets, including where appropriate, radio and TV outlets.

These press releases include promoting the good work the Council delivers within the community, promoting FDC and partner initiatives and programmes, and also communicating information about the Council including consultations, events or good news stories.

Key press releases included:

- Opening of newly redeveloped March railway station
- Preliminary designs revealed for March town centre transformation
- Commitment to customer service praised as Council retains national quality mark
- Delivering for Fenland while consistently freezing Council Tax, report highlights
- Help shape Fenland's future by having your say on new Draft Local Plan
- Whittlesey's rich history brought to life in new heritage walk
- Vital support and advice available to help residents with cost of living
- Hereward Community Rail Partnership celebrates 10th anniversary
- Fenland's volunteers honoured at celebration evening
- First ever International Christmas Golden Age Fair comes to Wisbech
- Multi-million pound transformation of March town centre is under way
- Fenland residents need photo ID to vote at elections in May

All press releases are generally shared with the following channels:

- FDC Members and town and parish councils
- Local media/newspapers – Fenland Citizen, Cambs Times, Wisbech Standard, Peterborough Telegraph and Cambridge News/Cambridgeshire Live
- Local Magazines – Discovering Magazines (March, Whittlesey and Wisbech editions), The Fens Magazine (Whittlesey and Wisbech editions) and Fenland Resident Magazine.
- Local Radio – BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, Greatest Hits Radio, Heart Radio and Fenland Youth Radio

In addition to publicising messages to the community, we also proactively manage all press enquiries from the local press, newspapers, radio and tv. To assist press enquiries, we also compile member quotes, statements and briefing notes

Social Media

We promote all Council news and services on our Social Media channels, Facebook and Twitter.

They are significantly increasing in popularity; we now have 6,459 followers on Facebook and 8,851 on Twitter.

We currently add 25/30 tweets on our twitter page per week and 25/30 posts on our Facebook page per week. There is a direct link on every page of our website to both our Facebook and twitter accounts.

Our social media accounts are a useful platform to communicate key service information including latest news, promotions and events. We also publicise and monitor key community-based information of partners and other local groups.

We promote a variety of news and are linked to the appropriate organisations that we can endorse (and who will endorse us.) A greater number of customers contact us through these mechanisms to raise service requests – these require same day responses.

We monitor social media channels for emerging issues so we can be on the front foot and respond to inaccurate media reports.

Website

Current performance:

Between 1 April 2021 and 31 January 2022, our website received 274,540 hits.

We are currently working on a CFF project relating to the FDC website: **Better Online Services.**

The project focusses on developing the Council's website to provide residents and businesses even better online services.

Our aim is to have an inviting and user-friendly website and to have a suite of online forms and online digital journeys that enable our residents and customers to self-serve via the website with little or no back-office intervention.

We work with all services to ensure the content and information is accurate and offers residents a user-friendly browsing experience.

The front page is tailored for users to find key information, services, top tasks and top transactions. Council latest news, information and events is also a key section of the front page.

Online Transactions

In total, we received 17,508 online form submissions via the council's website www.fenland.gov.uk

Our website offers 48 online forms; 5 new ones were developed this year.

The Fenland For Business website was relaunch with new content and is now hosted on the FDC website.

Our missed bins reporting form and suite of environmental service request forms are fully automated. This means that once the resident completes one of these online reporting forms, information is automatically added to the operatives in-cab work packs in real time without the need for staff intervention.

We have also launched 2 new customer digital journeys. Licensing and Events digital journeys allow customers to apply online for licences and events at a time convenient to them. Our digital journeys allow customer applications to be automatically into our back office system in real time and without the need for staff intervention.

Identify and deliver projects that support us to become a 'Council For the Future' (CFF) (Cllrs Chris Boden & Steve Tierney)

Our Cabinet members have selected a number of projects to contribute towards our 'Council for the Future' agenda. These projects have a variety of aims; from tackling areas of particular need within the district, to transforming services and the wider organisation sustainably to be fit for the future.

Although these projects are influenced by external factors, the aim is to have a programme of projects completed by the end of the current Council leadership term.

CFF projects:

- Modernising council services
- Better online services
- Bringing empty homes back into use
- A more commercial outlook
- Health you
- Putting communities first
- Safer homes for tenants
- Clamping down on poor parking
- Protecting our environment
- Competitive trade waste service
- Planning for the future
- Corporate building review
- Better railways for Fenland

There are 2 CFF projects led by the Communications and Transformation portfolio holder, **Modernising Council Services** and **Better Online Services**.

Please see summary of achievements from April 2022 for Better Online Services on page 8 and Modernising Council Services on page 9.

Better Online Services - April 2022 to January 2023


Our Aim

Our aim is to develop the Council's website to provide residents and businesses with even better online services.

FDC Website

 **274,540 visits** to www.fenland.gov.uk


 **17,508 webforms** completed online

 **Regular** update and front-page news story promotions to maintain user engagement

 **Accessibility** improvements undertaken to increase compliance with WCAG 2.1AA

 **Wisbech 2020 Vision** website brought back in house, with content hosted on the FDC website


 **Fenland For Business** website brought back in house, with content hosted on the FDC website


 **Launch of** 'Operation London Bridge' homepage template following the death of Her Majesty the Queen


Online Forms

 Our website offers **48 online forms**


 **17,508** webforms completed online from April 2022 to January 2023


 **Launch** of new online forms relating to Internment bookings, Commercial Waste enquiries, Noise complaints, Smoke complaints and the Local Plan consultation

 **Updates** undertaken to Garden Waste form to improve the user journey


 **Process mapping** work completed, and order placed for a Bulky Waste Collection form. Like our Missed Bin Reporting and Environmental Service Requests forms, it will be fully integrated with Bartec to provide real-time information to crews and reduce back-office resourcing

Digital Journeys

 **2 Idox** Digital Journey forms for Licensing and Events. These enable customers to supply information or apply for a license via our website on a 24/7 basis

 **Launch** of Noise Reporting, Smell Reporting and Event Application forms via Goss linking to Idox system, reducing the amount of back-office intervention required

Social Media

 **Links** to regular Council news, events and information to our 8,851 Twitter followers and 6,459 Facebook followers



Modernising Council Services - April 2022 to January 2023

Our Aim






Our aim is to transform council services to improve customer experience and make it even easier for people to interact with the council.

Customer Benefits







People

-  **2** new service areas supported by technical officers
-  **78** officers trained over **24** topics
-  **41,065** answered calls to our contact centre
-  **99%** of customer queries resolved at first point of contact

Finance

-  **8,237** payments made via PayPoint
-  **Over £994,000** in payments made via PayPoint
-  Development work on **PayPoint for Travellers** rent and water service
-  Purchased **Tree Management software** to enable development of processes for our open spaces team
-  **Fenland For Business** website brought back in house, with content hosted on the FDC website

Process

-  **67** new and existing process mapped
-  **11** processes redesigned
-  **Customer** digital journeys launched for Licensing and Events
-  **17,508** website forms completed online
-  **Over 274,540** visits to our FDC website
-  **5** new webforms



Deliver the 'Transforming Fenland' project to modernise customer service arrangements across the district (Cllr Steve Tierney)

Transforming Fenland is the first major corporate transformation programme under the Council for Future priority that focusses on modernising the way we deliver all aspects of our services to our customers. The team work across the organisation to independently review current processes and in collaboration with the service, recommend improvements and options to transform the way they work and the way in which customers access Council services.

The key focus has been ensuring we are putting the customer journey first and providing the best possible customer experience.

Why?

There are so many benefits and reasons for going through this transformational programme, such as:

- Improved customer experiences and smarter ways of working
- The opportunity to explore and introduce new technology to streamline the customer journey
- Improving our talent pipeline and succession planning for the Council.
- Improving service, driving down costs
- Identifying capacity released as a result of improvements and understanding how this resource could be re-allocated.

So far....

We have delivered the initial two phases of the My Fenland project, with a focus on customer interactions, opportunities for our customers to self-serve as a wider range of services and activities are consolidated in to the 'My Fenland' team. This involved process mapping a large number of new activities from service teams across the council.

In addition to our digital improvements, we continue to offer an appointment scheme for customers who still want to access council services face to face. We provide an enhanced individual service with a member of staff trained to deal with their query.

Key Successes from April 2022.....

- Creation of new MF team including the implementation of a new structure and roles, supported by a detailed and comprehensive training plan
- Implementation of Paypoint – over £994,000 payments made
- Development Technical Officer role to free up the capacity of specialist officers across the organisation.
- Two new services joining the My Fenland team and receiving support from

dedicated Technical Officers further releasing capacity of specialist officers. The capacity release will enable specialist officers to focus resource on income generating tasks for the Council.

- The development of new forms to enable customers to self-serve via our website
- Implementing a digital journeys package for Licensing and Environmental services. For example, Customers can supply information, such as reporting broken glass or dog fouling as well as apply for a new or to renew a licence, via our website, removing the need for Council staff having to duplicate data entry, improving accuracy whilst speeding up delivery time to our customers. Customers are also able to access these services 24/7
- Process mapping of tasks and activities identified as a priority and agreed by the project team Phase 1 of the Planning service review is underway with a number of key recommendations being implemented. Phase 2 of the review commenced in January 2023 and will focus on tasks carried out by Planning Officers.
- Upcoming launch of a new Bulky Waste Collection form for customers. These requests will integrate with our back office system (Bartec) without staff intervention, and enable customers to book and pay for bulky waste collections online as well as allowing the team to manage service peaks effectively.

Our officer and member unity has underpinned our journey giving it a real 'one team' approach. In light of the success of the project to date, members and officers were keen to enter 'Transformation' submissions to both the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) and the Municipal Journal (MJ) Awards. These awards are to celebrate Local Government success stories. We are currently waiting to see if we have been shortlisted.

The Future

Following the success of Phase 1 and 2, we are now developing phase 3, which is an organisational wide transformation programme. The successes of our new operating model and service mapping processes have given us the confidence and commitment to roll this programme out across the wider organisation. The Transformation Programme will further build on our previous successes and develop objectives under key emerging themes whilst maintaining our unwavering customer focus. The vision for our transformation programme is to ensure our Council is fit for the future.

3Cs Update (Cllr Steve Tierney)

Performance for the 3C's service between 1 April 2022 and 31 December 2022:

April 2022 – Dec 2022	Total received	Total within time frame	%age within time frame
Correspondence	68	64	94%
Stage 1	105	101	96%
Community Environment Leisure and Planning (CELP)	56	52	93%
Growth and infrastructure (GI)	0	0	N/A
Policy Resources and Customer Services (PRCS)	49	49	100%
Stage 2	8	7	88%
CELP	8	7	88%
GI	0	0	N/A
PRCS	0	0	N/A
Stage 3	10	9*	*Due date after reporting date
CELP	10	9*	*Due date after reporting date
GI	0	0	NA
PRCS	0	0	0

From 1 April 2022 we have adapted our 3cs reporting system to identify the breakdown of complaints, correspondence and comments into service areas and

key topics. This has allowed us to identify any common themes or patterns in service areas. This breakdown is included in the LGO Annual Review of Complaints that also reviewed at O&S.

ICT Transformation

ICT's workload can be categorised into 3 sections:

- Reactive Support – Day-to-day 'break-fix' support (e.g. password changes / broken laptop / unable to connect to the network).
- Proactive Maintenance – Replacement / upgrade of ICT infrastructure. (e.g. hardware replacement / software upgrades).
- Corporate Projects – Supporting the ongoing corporate transformation programme (e.g. Introducing new business applications / achieving VFM from current investments).

The ICT service aims to deliver continuous improvement in its journey to modernise the way we work, to deliver efficiencies to our services, and to improve service delivery to our customers.

Our achievements since April 2022 have helped to achieve these goals and to transform the way we work. These projects have included the following:

Online Cyber Security Training

As part of our drive to improve user knowledge in relation to cyber security and information management we now have 94% of staff appropriately trained and working towards our 100% goal. This training is designed for staff to drop in and out of according to their available time. The material is updated on a regular basis and forms part of our compliance conditions.

Mobile Device Management (MDM)

We have used Microsoft Intune (a cloud-based service delivering mobile device management and mobile application management) to control how devices (mobile phones, tablets, and laptops) are used. It controls who has access, and what they have access to. It will be used with the Microsoft 365 suite of products enabling users to be productive on all of their devices, while keeping our information protected.

Hybrid Working

We continue to improve our remote access systems to enable staff to work away from the office in terms of stability, performance and security. All staff that require remote access to corporate systems now have the necessary equipment assigned to them and the appropriate security processes in place.

Refresh Programme

We operate a continuous programme of hardware replacement throughout the year which ensures all hardware (telephony / servers / storage / desktops / network) remain supported and fit for purpose. Last year we completed the process of replacing all of our network switch infrastructure to ensure the hardware is supportable and compatible with our other systems, and to deliver reliability, availability and performance. Last year we completed the refresh of our entire network infrastructure and uplifted our DMZ and virtualised server environment onto new hardware, storage and operating system. We also improved the performance and capacity of our test environment by recycling storage and servers previously used in our live environment.

Business Application Upgrades

All business applications are upgraded / patched on a regular basis which is timetabled to suit the service areas, suppliers and ICT. Each year a number of major upgrades are conducted which take a significant amount of planning and resources. ICT are continually involved in the replacement of business applications to improve the efficiency of service units and provide a better service to the citizens of Fenland. There is a continual stream of requests coming into the service for which we provide guidance, technical knowledge, and project management. This year's successes have included;

- **Digital Journeys** - the introduction of self-service forms for licensing and event bookings.
- **HR / Payroll System** – Reviewing the market in readiness for our contract renewal.
- **Cemeteries System** – Reviewed the suitability of the system and processes followed.
- **Tree Management System** – Introducing a new system to manage our trees within the district.
- **Estates and Property Management System** – Reviewing the market for a replacement system.

- **Planning System** – Implementing changes to ensure the system is as efficient and effective as possible.

Cloud Infrastructure Review

We are in the process of review our infrastructure now embarking on a fresh review to ascertain where our infrastructure and data would be best located to leverage the most benefit for the authority in terms of cost, reliability and resilience. The results of this exercise with help to inform the Accommodation review, ICT's future space requirements, and any cost of moving premise should the need arise.

Collaboration with Teams, SharePoint and OneDrive

Microsoft 365 is designed to be a universal toolkit to give staff integrated and flexible ways to work for their projects and tasks. You can store and share files using SharePoint, OneDrive, and Microsoft Teams. We are currently rolling-out these features to staff to facilitate collaboration and efficiency.

GDPR Compliance

A significant amount of redundant electronic data has been removed from our cloud storage in accordance with our data retention policy as well as our on-site file storage areas. We continue to manage paper documents within Planning to reduce the volume of paper records and ultimately allow these records to be accessed remotely. All office storage is being reviewed to; free-up space, ensure documents are stored securely, become more environmentally friendly, and improve customer service.

Contact Centre and Telephony Enhancements

As a way of making our service delivery more flexible, we continue to investigate the costs and technical possibilities of delivering our telephone contact centre from the cloud. This will remove the need for having our own hardware / software and associated support contracts on site. This may also enable calls from customers to be answered from anywhere, reducing the need for office space and alternative business continuity arrangements. We are currently working with partners to review their offerings as well as the costs, and we investigate the advantages and disadvantages of a cloud-hosted solution.

Public Access WiFi

Connecting Cambridgeshire, the digital connectivity programme led by Cambridgeshire County Council, is expanding free public access WiFi services to help people get online, support businesses and make it easier to access vital public services. The programme is working with partners to increase free public access WiFi provision in public buildings, open spaces, market town centres and village halls in rural areas. Last year we introduced WiFi access points within Whittlesey town centre and the infrastructure is in place ready for this to be made available within March.

Direct Internet Connectivity for 365

We are working towards the move to a safe and robust way of connecting corporate devices directly to Microsoft 365 in the cloud rather than traversing through the FDC network. This will make the process for accessing emails and stored files more user-friendly whilst still providing the appropriate levels of security.

Digital Switch Over

It has been announced that the telecommunications industry will replace all analogue lines and upgrade to digital internet-based infrastructure by 2025. An investigation is well underway to look into the replacement of ISDN (integrated services digital network) services with SIP (session initiation protocol) technology.

Business Centre Audio-Visual Equipment

All equipment has been replaced in all of the larger meeting rooms at the Boathouse and South Fens Business Centre. We are now looking to improve cellular coverage for mobile phones and WiFi performance.

Security – Improved security around email traffic by introducing authentication techniques and encrypted digital signatures. Also further prevention has been put in place to protect against spoofing and phishing scams.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Target 22/23	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries resolved at first point of contact	Rolling monthly target of 85% per month	99%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (March 2023)	90%	Customer satisfaction rates are formally recorded annually during February	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	46.5%	50.64%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	80%	90.06%	
PRC5	Number of online forms submitted via FDC Website	22,000	17,508	

Key:	
	Within 5% of target
	5-10% below target
	10% or more below target