

Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Progress Against the Transformation & Communications Priorities

**For performance from
1 April 2024 to 31 August 2024**

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:

- Business Plan and Budget
- Annual Report
- Transformation projects
- Fenland for Business projects
- Environmental Services projects
- March Future High Street Fund

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
- Business Grants
- Community support projects (i.e. Grants available, Community Safety Partnership projects)
- Street Pride events
- Four Seasons events
- Golden Age events
- Commercial Investment Strategy
- Hereward Community Rail Partnership projects

Consultation

An updated Corporate Consultation Strategy was agreed at Cabinet in July 2024.

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 between 1 April and 31 August included:

- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy – 8 July – 15 September 2024
- Taxi Tariff Consultation – July – 11 August 2024
- Fenland Play Zones – August – 8 September 2024

Details of all our consultations are displayed on our website: [Consultations - Fenland District Council](#)

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.

We continue to oversee all Corporate Policies and Strategies ensuring they are publicised on our website or intranet.

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.

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:

- £20 million for Wisbech Town Centre is a real opportunity.
- Deaf-led business benefits from business grant to increase inclusive employment opportunities.
- Fly-tippers hit with penalties totalling more than £3k.
- Council partners with new HIA to enhance support for vulnerable residents.
- What to expect at the polling station for elections on 2 May.
- Whittlesea Railway Station £3m investment moves forward.
- Active Fenland Activities this Summer
- Don't miss Chatteris Midsummer festival 2024
- Council Maintains gold standard in customer services
- Fenland rail partnership launches art competition as part of anniversary celebrations
- Grants up to £25,000 available to help bring empty shops back into use
- Bids invited for March shopfront improvement grants of up to £50,000
- Changing Places toilets improve accessibility in Fenland

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, 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 7,987 followers on Facebook and 8,808 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 2024 and 31 August 2024, our website received over 50,000 hits.

As part of our transformation agenda, we are continually working 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 8,762 online form submissions via the council's website www.fenland.gov.uk

Our website offers 50 online forms.

We continue to develop the Fenland for Business website with new content and is now hosted on the FDC website.

We launch a new online bulky waste form in April 2023 to enhance our suite of environmental service request forms which 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.

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

Transformation – Our Journey To Date

In 2019, we began our Transformation Agenda programme (TA1). The objectives of this were to:

- Review and transform our customer facing services.
- Processes were streamlined to improve consistency and efficiency across the organisation.
- Improve customer experience and make it easy for people to interact with the council.
- Develop our technology to enable our customers to self-serve.
- Develop our operating model and staff skill set.
- Grow our own talent with clear entry point and career pathway.
- Introduce technical officers to free up the capacity of specialist/professional officers.
- Develop back office integrated technology to assist with efficient ways of working.
- The main aim of the programme has been to support the delivery of a sustainable approach to transforming the organisation; an approach that would allow the Council to meet its financial savings targets, whilst also

protecting the standards and quality of front-line services.

TA1 has successfully delivered on these objectives including the contribution of over £1m of cashable savings over the medium term and has helped in the development of more modern and resilient working practices.

Transformation - Our Aims

Transformation Agenda 2 (TA2) is already building on the successes of TA1. The TA2 programme outlines how the Council is moving forward to provide more value and benefits to residents and businesses in the district and aims to further accelerate the process of modernisation across the council, enabling the delivery of high quality, cost-effective, efficient services in a challenging environment.

TA2 aims to drive significant change and innovation throughout the Council and help us provide the very best outcomes with the resources available. It includes the following:

- Be a modern, innovative, and dynamic organisation.
- Achieve a sustainable financial future successfully addressing the financial deficit (£2m for 25/26)
- Develop a skilled and flexible workforce
- Deliver more purposeful, high-quality services to meet customer needs at reduced cost to the Council.

Transformation – Our Principles



Transformation – Our Approach

Service reviews represent the majority share of the TA2 Programme. There are currently 31 services across the council, each of which are included in the service review programme

All services have completed a matrix that has been analysed by the transformation team

The completed matrices inform the Service Prioritisation score.

The Service Prioritisation Score is calculated by multiplying the potential risk factors score by the potential opportunities score. This ensures reviews are prioritised for services which represent the greatest potential savings, risk management and wider opportunities.

The scores inform the timing of the associated Transformation Team service review, prioritising those with the greatest potential for cashable savings, risk mitigation as well as wider scale efficiencies. The Service Review timings have been agreed by CMT and Management Team and are mapped on the resulting Transformation Programme Plan.

Transformation – Our Successes

- In addition to the £1m cashable savings achieved in TA1 a further £105.5k of cashable savings have been achieved as a direct result of TA2
- Service reviews have resulted in a further £6.8k of income generation, £17k of cost avoidance and £7.6k in debt reduction
- In addition the service reviews have also released Officer capacity as a result of introducing more efficient processes and maximising the use of technology releasing 1,800 officer hours in 23/24 and on course to release a further 2,000 officer hours in 24/25.
- **Service Reviews currently In Progress**
- Public Health Funerals, add resilience.
- Cemeteries Service Review, remove risk and improve processes.
- Finance Service Review. Better administrative processes.
- My Fenland Contact Centre
- Garden Waste Direct Debit process automation
- Sports Development Service Review.
- ARP Service Review, optimise relationships
- Marine Service Review, reduce risk and officer efficiencies.
- Housing Options Service Review.
- Private Sector Housing
- Environmental Services
- Environmental Health

- Fleet, reduce costs and risk
- Planning Service, save officer time

3Cs Update (Cllr Steve Tierney)

Performance for the 3C's service from 1 April to 30 August 2024:

	Total received	On time	% On time
Correspondence			
	38	29	76%
Stage 1			
Communities Environment Leisure and Planning (CELP)	53	48	91%
Growth and Infrastructure (GI)	-	-	-
Policy Resources and Customer Services (PRCS)	24	21	88%
Total	77	69	89%
Stage 2			
CELP	4	2	50%
GI	-	-	-
PRCS	4	4	100%
Total	8	6	75%
Stage 3			
CELP	2	2	100%
GI	-	-	-
PRCS	2	2	100%
Total	4	4	100%

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 analysis takes place on a monthly basis and for the financial year ending 31 March 2024 no patterns or trends were identified.

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 past achievements have enabled us 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 all staff undertake online training annually. This training is split into modules so that staff can drop in and out to complete this according to their available time. The material is updated on a regular basis and forms part of our compliance conditions. The 23/24 training programme was successfully completed by all employees earlier this year. We have now released the 24/25 programme, and this has been issued to all employees for completion.

Mobile Device Management (MDM)

We now use Microsoft Intune (a cloud-based service delivering mobile device management and mobile application management) to control how mobile devices (mobile phones, tablets, and laptops) are used. It controls who has access, and what they have access to. It is being 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 have the necessary equipment assigned to them and the appropriate security processes in place. The process for accessing applications and data in the Microsoft cloud has been reviewed, and this has resulted in a much more efficient process for staff without reducing our security position.

Refresh Programme

We operate a continuous programme of hardware which ensures all hardware (telephony /servers / storage / desktops / network) remains supported and fit for purpose. We also improve our test environment to ensure the performance and capacity is in line with development / testing needs.

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;

- **HR / Payroll System** – Introduced a replacement system to deliver benefits and efficiencies to the authority. This is now available to all staff through a mobile app.
- **Cemeteries System** – Currently reviewing responses from potential suppliers for a replacement system.
- **Tree Management System** – Introduced a new system to manage our trees within the district. This will assist with inspection regimes, public safety, timely identification of hazards, and response to complaints.
- **Planning System** – A major review of the processes / technology used to ensure the system is as efficient and effective as possible, including the automation of many manual processes and reporting / management of progress and performance.
- **DocuSign** – A service that allows the sending and management of documents that require a signature. This has saved a significant amount of officer time and travel within our Housing service.
- **Corporate Booking System** – An online booking system has been introduced for markets and events, and leisure services. This allows the customer to self-serve and make payments, at their convenience.
- **GrantFinder** – A service supported by a dedicated team of expert researchers who monitor, verify and report daily on thousands of funding sources including charitable trusts, societies, research councils, national government, and corporate sponsors.
- **Economic Growth CRM** – An online system to manage the relationship between the council and local businesses.

Cloud Infrastructure Review

We continue to review our infrastructure to ascertain how and where systems and data are best located to leverage the most benefit for the authority in terms of cost, reliability and resilience. This reduces our dependency on a physical location for hosting our infrastructure.

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. We now store and share files using SharePoint, OneDrive, and Microsoft Teams to facilitate collaboration and efficiency. 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. All staff now use Microsoft Teams for making / receiving telephone calls.

Data Management / GDPR Compliance

We continue to manage paper documents within Planning to reduce the volume of paper records and to 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 have migrated contact centre into the cloud. This has removed the need for having our own hardware / software and associated support contracts on site, as well as the need for future hardware refresh. This will enable calls / webchat / emails from customers to be answered from anywhere. As well as the contact centre, all back-office telephone calls are now made via Microsoft Teams, and all staff telephone handsets have been removed.

Digital Switch-Over

It was announced that the telecommunications industry will replace all analogue lines and upgrade to digital internet-based infrastructure by December 2025. This deadline has now been extended to January 2027. Most of our analogue services have now been migrated to digital, with any remaining services being migrated in the coming months.

Business Centre Audio-Visual Equipment

After replacing all audio-visual equipment in all of the larger meeting rooms at the Boathouse and South Fens Business Centre, we have also significantly improved the cellular coverage for mobile phones and WiFi performance within these buildings.

Security

We have introduced a safe and robust way of connecting corporate devices directly to Microsoft 365 in the cloud, rather than traversing through the FDC network. This has made the process of accessing emails and stored files more user-friendly, whilst still providing the appropriate levels of security. All security practices are continuously reviewed to defend against an ever-present and increasing threat of cyber incidents.

Key PIs: For the period 1 April 2024 to 30 August 2024

Key PI	Description	Target 24/25	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries processed at first point of contact	Rolling monthly target of 85% per month	99%	
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (measured annually in February)	90%	97.94% Customer satisfaction rates are formally recorded annually during February	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	46.5%	54.48%	
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	80%	92.06 %	

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