Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Progress Against the Transformation & Communications Priorities

Portfolio Holders

Councillor Chris Boden
Leader of the Council

Cllr 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/grants
- Environmental Services projects
- Fenland Inspire! projects
- Local Government Reorganisation

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

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.

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 are currently assisting with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Government Reorganisation project as well as the Fenland Inspire! projects.

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, Twitter and LinkedIn. 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.

All press releases are generally shared with the following channels:

- FDC Members and town and parish councils
- Local media – 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.

We also produce a monthly digital Fenlander newsletter with updates on council news, events and services: The Fenlander Newsletter - Fenland District Council

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Social Media

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

They are significantly increasing in popularity; we now have 8,757 followers on Facebook, 8,567 on X, and 2,071 on LinkedIn.

We currently add 25/30 tweets on our Facebook and X platforms, and 10/15 on our LinkedIn.

There is a direct link on every page of our website to both our Facebook and X 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:

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
Last year we received over 19,000 online form submissions via the council's website www.fenland.gov.uk

Our website offers over 50 online forms.

Many of our commonly used environmental services online 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.

Deliver the 'Transforming Fenland' project to modernise customer service arrangement across the district

In 2019, we began our Transformation Agenda programme (TA1). This focussed on transforming the way the Council delivers all aspects of our services to our customers. TA1 has successfully delivered over £1m savings over the medium term.

In 2023/24 the Transformation Agenda 2 (TA2) was launched. The objectives of TA2 were to build in the successes of the TA1 programme and further drive forward transformation change across all services within the Council.

Following the emergence of the TA2 Programme, the Team currently supports three key strands of work including proactive Service Reviews, encompassing all services across the organisation, Ad-Hoc requests in addition to Corporate Transformation projects.

Since the relaunch of TA2 in 2023/24, £241k of cashable savings have been implemented in addition to those already achieved as a result of TA1. In addition over 7,000 of Officer hours have been saved as a result of exploiting the use of technology as well as introducing more efficient business processes. The team have also identified and put in place effective mitigating actions in respect of 20 significant business risks, which had the potential to cause significant service disruption and/ or reputation damage to the Council in the event that they materialised.

Work is ongoing in respect of the automation of business processes which will further free up office capacity to support those with the most complex of need.

More recently the team are increasingly involved in corporate projects to ensure their success, this slightly different emphasis has arisen due to the changing context in which the organisation works including The Fenland Inspire Programme and Local Government Reform.

Transformation Projects Currently in Progress

- Environmental Health
- Property Estates and Assets
- Planning
- Environmental Services including telematics
- Public Sector Housing
- Liens
- Hybrid Print and Post
- Agresso Upgrade
- Labour Costs Review
- Fenland Inspire Programme Management
- LGR Programme Management Support
- Process automation

3C's Update

Performance for the 3C's service from 1 April to 31 May 2025:

April - May 2025	Total received	On time	% On time
Correspondence			
	17	16	94.1%
Stage 1			
CELP	17	14	82.3%
GI	0	0	N/A
PRCS	9	9	100%
Stage 2			
CELP	2	1	50%
GI	0	0	N/A
PRCS	0	0	N/A
Complaints triaged as service requests *			
CELP	17		
GI	0		
PRCS	0		

Please note that the new two stage 3C's policy was implemented 1 April 2025.

*A service request is where the council provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision that we have made. Service requests may contain an expression of dissatisfaction. We will take the opportunity to deal with a service request before a complaint is made.

Examples of service requests include the reporting of a missed bin, planning enforcement and noise complaints.

ICT Transformation

The ICT service aims to deliver continuous improvement in its journey to modernise the way we work, to deliver efficiencies to services, enabling us to improve service delivery to our customers. Our achievements since April 2024 have helped to deliver these goals and to transform the way we work.

As part of our drive to improve user knowledge in relation to cyber security and information management all staff have undertaken online training again this year. 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. ICT carry out phishing exercises to ensure staff learning has become sufficiently embedded.

We continue to improve our remote access systems to enable staff to work away from the office. All staff that require remote access to corporate systems have the necessary equipment assigned to them, and the appropriate security processes are in place. The process for accessing applications and data was reviewed during the past year and now delivers a more efficient process for the user without reducing our security position. We now connect corporate devices directly to Microsoft 365 in the cloud, rather than traversing through the FDC network. This has made the process for 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.

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

All business applications are upgraded / patched on a regular basis which is timetabled to suit the service areas, suppliers and ICT. Each year, several major upgrades are carried out which take a significant amount of planning and resources. ICT are continually involved in the replacement of business applications to improve the efficiency of services and in turn provide a better service to the citizens of Fenland.

There is a continuous stream of requests coming into the service for which we provide guidance, technical knowledge, and project management. We aim to deliver a reactive response for day-to-day 'break-fix' support (e.g. password changes / broken laptop / unable to connect to the network), proactive maintenance for all business applications and hardware, and any necessary replacement / upgrade of ICT infrastructure.

Much of our time is spent on delivering corporate projects and supporting the ongoing corporate transformation programme (e.g. Introducing new business applications / achieving VFM from current investments).

We look to use Microsoft 365 as a universal toolkit to give staff integrated and flexible ways to work for their projects and tasks. We store and share files using SharePoint, OneDrive, and 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. We continue to manage paper documents within the council to reduce the volume of paper records and to allow these records to be accessed remotely. All office storage has been reviewed to ensure documents are stored securely and improve service delivery.

We have delivered a new telephone contact centre from the cloud. This has removed the need for having our own hardware / software and associated support requirements on site. This has also enabled calls from customers to be answered from anywhere, reducing the need for office space and alternative business continuity arrangements. As well as the contact centre, all back-office telephone calls are now made via the Microsoft Teams interface, and all telephone handsets have been removed.

We have successfully replaced all analogue lines and upgraded to digital internet-based infrastructure as required to be ready for the Digital Switchover.