Agenda Item No:	7	
Committee:	**Overview & Scrutiny**	
Date:	**7 March 2022**	
Report Title:	**Progress in Delivering the Transformation and Communication Portfolio 2021-2022**	

1   Purpose / Summary

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

2   Key issues

Particular successes are:

- 95 press releases published between 01 April 2021 and 31 January 2022.

- Increased popularity of the Council's Social Media Channels. We now have 5,594 followers on Facebook and 8,726 on Twitter.

- Providing vital communications messages on key corporate projects including

    o March Future High Street Fund

    o Business Plan and Budget

    o Annual Report

    o Transforming the Council project

    o Growing Fenland Masterplans

    o Fenland Railway Station Masterplans

    o Garden waste subscriptions

    o Wisbech High Street Project

- Supporting key corporate consultations including

    o Draft Business Plan & Budget

    o West March Broad Concept Plan

    o Whittlesey Heritage walk

    o Wisbech Park Community Hub

    o Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

    o Have your say on a new political map for FDC

    o Walking, Cycling and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy

- Promote Covid related communications to staff, residents and businesses highlighting news, services and support available.

- Progress of the Better Online Services Council for the Future project and development of online transactions.
  - Increased popularity of the Council's website with over 711,000 hits between 01 April 2021 and 31 January 2022.
  - 15,542 online forms completed, and 8 new online forms launched in 2021. 17 customer digital journeys launched in 2021.

- Progress of the Modernising Council Services Council for the Future project, in particular the My Fenland project and improved customer experience.
  - Creation of new My Fenland team, new structure, roles, and training plan.
  - Implementation of PayPoint - over £1.8million payments made
  - Implementation of an appointment scheme for customers wishing to access Council services face to face, enabling us to provide an enhanced individualised service

- Delivery of a suite of ICT projects which are seeking to modernise service delivery across the Council.
  - Enable 92% of office-based staff to be able to work remotely in response to the Covid pandemic.
  - All ICT users have been provided with a laptop running the latest supported Microsoft Windows operating system and Microsoft 365 suite of applications
  - Introduced an improved user education programme in cyber security and information management. We encourage all staff to take up the cyber security and GDPR online training.

3 Key Areas of Focus for 2022

- 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 Modernising Council Services project and transforming Council services to improve customer experience.

- 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 2021 - 2022.

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 - Acting 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 2021 to 31st January 2022

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 project
- Growing Fenland Masterplans
- 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:
- Sports Development/Active Fenland programme
- Recycling projects/Getting it Sorted project
- Fenland for Business projects
- Community support projects (i.e. CARC service, grants available, Community Safety Partnership projects)
- Street Pride events/'Welcome Back' event
- 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
- West march Broad Concept Plan
- Whittlesey Heritage walk
- Wisbech Park Community Hub
- Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- Have your say on a new political map for FDC
- Walking, Cycling and Mobility Aid Improvement Strategy

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 now attend the Corporate Induction with CMT to present these important key documents and engage new starters about their role in the wider 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 2021 and 31 January 2022, we have publicised 95 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:
- Council embarks on ambitious transformation programme to improve customer experience
- March Future High Streets Project pushes ahead after CPCA agrees vital funding support
- Volunteers celebrate at Council's 'Welcome Back' event
- Pandemic heroes celebrated at 2021 Pride in Fenland awards
- Princess Eugenie visits Wisbech to learn more about district's efforts to tackle modern slavery
- Series of press releases on Wisbech High Street Project (grants, developments and activities)
- Fenland's recycling efforts buck national trend

All press releases are generally shared with the following channels:
- FDC Members and town and parish councils
- Local 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 5,594 followers on

Facebook and 8,726 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.

Covid Communications

Covid communications has been a major focus since March 2020 with both internal and external communications.

We continue to follow and publicise national Government and Public Heath England (PHE) advice and guidance in respect of COVID-19. We also promote and support all Cambridgeshire wide campaigns and messaging.

The latest information is being shared through the Council's COVID-19 web page at: www.fenland.gov.uk/coronavirus and the Council's social media accounts.

We are also publicising press releases for all key Council news and service information relating to COVID-19.

We continue to provide communications support and materials to the BAME and Community Champions, the Think Family Champions, Volunteer groups, local businesses and community groups.

Key communication campaigns and messaging since the outbreak includes:

- COVID-19 Community Hub – signposting and promotion of services
- Hardship Fund Payments
- Numerous Business Grants to Fenland Businesses
- Promotion of Government National messaging

- Promotion of Public Health messaging – including rapid testing, vaccinations and boosters
- Promotion of Cambridgeshire wide messaging – including COVID-19 campaigns, winter safe, stay safe and stand firm campaigns

In total, we have had 135,000 Coronavirus page views since their launch.

We continue to circulate relevant Covid update comms to staff via emails and the intranet.

Website

Current performance:
Between 1 April 2021 and 31 January 2022, our website received 711,109 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
Online form submissions via the council's website www.fenland.gov.uk were at a record high during 2021 (1 January – 31 December).

In total, we received 15,542 online form submissions (excluding Garden Waste Subscriptions) – an increase compared to 2020 (14,578).

Our website offers over 50 online forms; 8 new ones were developed this year.

Our new 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 17 customer digital journeys. A suite of taxi licensing and premises licences allow customers to apply online for licences at a time convenient to them. All digital journeys allow customer applications to be automatically into out 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
- CCTV service
- 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 for Better Online Services on page 9 and Modernising Council Services on page 10

Better Online Services

"Developing the Council's website to provide residents and businesses with even better online services"

Our Aim

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

FDC Website

- **New website** - design and content transformed to offer residents a more modern, user-friendly browsing experience

- **Mobile friendly** - information and features are the same for all devices: pc, laptop, tablet, phone

- **969,144** visits to fenland.gov.uk from April 2020 to March 2021 (**767,361** in 2019/20)

- **15,542** website forms completed online in 2021 (**14,578** in 2020)

- **Front page** - regular updates on the latest Council news, events, and information

- **Social media** - links to regular Council news, events and information to our Twitter followers (**8726**) and our Facebook followers (**5594**)

Online Forms

- Our website offers over **50 online forms**

- **8** new online forms launched in 2021

- **15,542** website forms completed online in 2021

- New **Missed Bin** form allowing real time reporting

- New suite of **Environmental Service Request** forms that allow reporting of; abandoned vehicles, broken glass, dead animals, dog fouling, fly-tipping, fly-posting, graffiti, request a litter pick or street sweep, overflowing litter bin, syringes & needles

- **Missed Bin** and **Environmental Service Request** forms are automatically added to operative's in-cab workpacks in real time without the need for staff intervention

Digital Journeys

- **17** customer digital journeys launched in 2021

- New suite of **Taxi Licensing** journeys that allow new and renewal applications for: private hire driver, vehicle and operator, and hackney carriage driver and vehicle

- New suite of **Premises Licensing** journeys that allow new and renewal applications for: food registration, club certificate, interim authority notice, notification of interest, new and transfer licenses, full & minor variation, temporary event notice, tables & chairs, and pavement licence

- **Taxi Licensing** and **Premises Licensing** applications are automatically added into our back office system in real time without the need for staff intervention

---

Fenland CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Fenland District Council

fenland.gov.uk
FenlandCouncil
FenlandDistrictCouncil

Modernising Council Services

"Transforming council services to improve customer experience and make it even easier for people to interact with the council"

Our Impact

The My Fenland project, our first corporate transformation project, was commissioned in January 2020. Since then we have delivered:

Customer Benefits

People

- **5** admin services brought together
- **29** staff in new roles
- **158** requests for appointments, resulting in **55** appointments
- **285** training sessions completed covering **34** topics
- **63,125** answered calls to contact centre in 2021
- **99.5%** of customer queries resolved at first point of contact

Finance

- **15,454** payments made via PayPoint
- **Over £1.84m** in payments made via PayPoint
- **£18,500** saved in G4S reduced collections
- **£203,000** savings in 2021/22
- **700 hrs** additional capacity released
- **2 days** per week chargeable support to Hunts DC

Process

- **136** process mapped across services
- **33** processes redesigned
- **8** service teams supported by Technical officers
- **17** customer digital journeys launched in 2021
- **8** new online website forms launched in 2021
- **15,542** website forms completed online in 2021
- **969,144** visits to our FDC website in 2020/21

Fenland
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Fenland District Council

📞 **01354 654321**

@ **info@fenland.gov.uk**

🌐 **fenland.gov.uk**

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

My 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. It has involved updating and streamlining our processes to improve consistency and efficiency across the organisation, investing is new IT solutions and technology to improve the process for both staff and customers.

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
- Bringing together a range of discreet/defined services as a single point of contact and delivery, providing a more joined-up approach across the Council
- Reducing the number of staff handling customer data, which reduces error and the potential GDPR risk
- Better resilience in teams, and so a more consistent and effective customer service
- Improving our talent pipeline and succession planning for the Council.
- Improving service, driving down costs

So far….

We have delivered the initial two phases of the 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.

We have had some Key Successes…..
- 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 £1.8 million payments made
- Launch of the Council's new website.
- Development and implementation of the Technical Officer role to free up the capacity of specialist officers across the organisation.
- The upgrade to the Telephony switch to enable, enhanced call routing and use of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) functionality as well as web chat.

- Reviewed and amended options for customers presenting by phone to simplify choices and reduce waiting times, including an appointment option.
- Implementation of an appointment scheme for customers wishing to access Council services face to face, enabling us to provide an enhanced individualised service to customers providing them a convenient time for them with a member of staff trained to deal with their query.
- The development of new forms to enable customers to self–serve via our website (e.g. missed bins; removing the need for back office intervention. These requests will be sent from our website into Bartec's in-cab technology
- The integration work with Bartec (in cab technology) and Agresso (corporate accounting system) is now complete and invoices are now being generated automatically without the need of manual input for officers. As well as maximising the use of technology, improved automation between software is also enabling us to concentrate more resources on answering phone calls and allowing more time to spend on in depth customer queries within the My Fenland team. This in turn frees up professional officer capacity, which is one of the key principles of this transformation approach
- Implementing a digital journeys package for Licensing and Environmental services. For example, Customers can supply information, such as reporting broken glass or dog fowling 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, work is currently underway in relation to process mapping Planning Services, Property and Assets, Tree Management, Cemeteries and Private Sector Housing. These projects will inform the transformation programme for 2022/23

3Cs Update (Cllr Steve Tierney)

Performance for the 3C's service between 1 April 2021 and 31 January 2022:

April 2021 – Jan 2022	Total received	Total within time frame	%age within time frame
Correspondence	56	51	91%
Stage 1			
Community Environment Leisure and Planning (CELP)	113	93	82%
Growth and infrastructure (GI)	1	1	100%
Policy Resources and Customer Services (PRCS)	66	59	89%
Stage 2			
CELP	11	9	82%
GI	1	1	100%
PRCS	5	4	80%
Stage 3			
CELP	7	7	100%
GI	0	0	NA
PRCS	5	4	80%

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 will allow us to identify any common themes or patterns in service areas.

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 2021 have helped to achieve these goals and to transform the way we work through the Covid-19 pandemic. These projects have included the following:

Remote Working

Our aim to enable more staff to be able to work remotely was significantly accelerated in response to the Covid pandemic. All staff that require remote access to corporate systems now have the necessary equipment assigned to them. This equates to 92% of office-based staff. Additional hardware has also been added to the remote access infrastructure to improve resilience.

Desktop Solutions

All ICT users have been provided with a laptop running the latest supported Microsoft Windows operating system and Microsoft 365 suite of applications. The latest versions of operating systems and applications are now delivered to our staff on a more frequent basis so that we take advantage of the latest features available. We are now using Endpoint Manager, part of the Microsoft suite, providing more security and management tools for remote devices.

Online Training

We have introduced an improved user education programme in cyber security and information management. We encourage all staff to take up the cyber security and GDPR training which we provide online. 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.

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. This year we have provided all mobile phone users with a replacement handset managed by InTune which is part of our Microsoft licence, saving the cost of the previous MDM (mobile device management) solution. Also, we are in the process of replacing of our network switch infrastructure to ensure the hardware is supportable and compatible with our other systems, and to deliver reliability, availability and performance.

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 further development of our payment channels to allow customers to make payments to even more council services. Also work has been done to centralise invoicing from various service area systems to our central financial management system. We have also enhanced digital channels allowing customers to self-serve and access services 24x7.

Security / Compliance

We are in the process of conducting a full review of our security measures and processes. We aim to ensure our processes are appropriate and proportionate for the authority's needs. There has recently been an increasing number of malicious cyber-attacks against organisations, including local authorities. We have continued to get as much benefit out of our previous investments in security technologies as possible and keep up to date with the latest developments. We have extended our use of AI to help automate our response to ongoing threats.

GDPR Compliance

We have continued to manage electronic data and assist in digitising paper records. A significant amount of redundant electronic data has been removed from our cloud storage in accordance with our data retention policy. We have also continued to manage paper documents within Planning, HR & Finance to enable the disposal of paper records which are no longer required, and back-scan documents we do need to keep and facilitate the process to allow these to be accessed remotely.

Telephony

The upgrade of all telephony controllers and software, including the Contact Centre management system and the introduction of soft phone technology, has enabled the use of a 'single pane' system for Customer Advisors to manage all telephone calls and received. The processes followed by staff have been refined during the year and the integrated CRM system now manages all customer interactions. This has now been complimented by the introduction of WebChat which is accessed through enhancements to our website.

Current / Future Projects include;

- **Full Security Review** to ensure our systems and processes are adequate to resist most malware / cyber-attacks. We are in the process of upgrading all endpoints to connect directly to a central cloud-based service for antivirus.

- **Upgrade Microsoft SQL Servers** to benefit from latest features and ensure future support.

- **Provide an integrated Local Land Charges platform** for HMLR's National Digital Register.

- **Build Further Resilience** for our MFA (multi-factor authentication) solution to improve availability and to introduce a solution to be used across technologies.

- **Introduce More Opportunities for Collaborative Working** through the further use of Microsoft applications, specifically Teams, SharePoint and OneDrive.

- **Enhance Disaster Recovery** procedures around telephony and remote working.

- **Introduce SIP Trunking** to replace out-going technologies and provide revenue savings. This project will also look at the resilience of technologies used within our Contact Centre.

- **Improve Risk and Compliance Management** within the ICT service.

- **Upgrade Business Applications** to benefit from latest features provided and maintain security and supportability. This will also include the introduction of systems that are currently performed manually.

- **Maintain GDPR Compliance** by continuing to manage electronic data and assist in digitising paper records.

- **Ensure Compliance** through certification with PSN and PCI DSS.

- **Upgrade / Replace Audio-Visual Equipment** at the Boathouse and South Fens Business Centre.

- **Further Enhance Digital Channels** allowing customers to self-serve and access services 24 x 7.

- **Improve hardware capacity** in our virtual environment allowing the uplift of servers to the latest versions of operating systems.

- **Robust Release Management** processes ensuring our physically separated test environment continues to be appropriately commissioned for the safe testing of new applications / patches / upgrades.

- **Data Storage Review** to ensure we provide the required capacity, performance availability and security for a changing working environment.

Key PIs:

Key PI	Description	Baseline	Target 21/22	Cumulative Performance	Variance (RAG)
PRC1	% of customer queries resolved at first point of contact	97.3%	Rolling monthly target of 85% per month	99%	🟩
PRC2	% of customers satisfied with our service (March 2022)	75%	90%	Customer satisfaction rates are formally recorded annually during February	
PRC3	% of contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	74.81%	Rolling monthly target rising to 40% by March 2022	30.3%	🟧
PRC4	% of contact centre calls handled	96.4%	Rolling monthly target rising to 80% by March 2022	74.6%	🟩
PRC5	Number of visits to our website	969,144	825,000	711,109	🟩

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