

Corporate & Community Services

Portfolio Holder Statement Update for 2013/14

Success

The two main projects that have had a major impact on the whole of ICT Services in 2013/14 are Agile Working and Public Sector Network (PSN) compliance.

The demand for agile working across the Council to deliver more efficient services and improved work life balance for our staff gathered pace in 2013/14. At the end of the year, through the provision of Virtual Desktops and Laptop PCs, over half the Council has the ability to work in an agile way. Furthermore it is planned that by the end of August 2014 a further 100 virtual desktops will be deployed. This will mean that two thirds of the Council will have some form of access to location independent working.

Additional agile working technologies have also been introduced, such as Jabber, to assist with communicating in an agile environment; Instant Messaging (IM), presence, telephony and in some case Video Conferencing and desktop sharing. Corporate and guest Wi-Fi has been extended to the Town Hall and a mobile working solution (TotalMobile) has been piloted for our 'field' workers. The latter has demonstrated the potential for some significant efficiency gains and service improvements.

The PSN has been the source of considerable debate throughout the Council in 2013/14 with the restrictions it has placed on the way we operate. Nevertheless at its inception Warwick DC was one of the first 50 Councils to obtain PSN compliance. This was a positive achievement recognising not only how well the ICT service is operated, but also recognised the strength of the Information Governance arrangements the Council has in place.

When the PSN rules were changed in October 2013 which led to the temporary suspension of our compliance certificate, fifty percent of the ICT Service was actively engaged in making the necessary changes to regain compliance. This was subsequently achieved, and the Council is now fully connected to the PSN network without any loss of service to the Housing Benefits department which is its principle user.

Outside of the core ICT activities the GIS team implemented a new charging policy for Street Naming Numbering (SN&N) 2013/14. The GIS team inherited SN&N from Neighbourhood Services which delivered an average income of circa £6,000. In 2012/13, its first year of operation under ICT Services, SN&N delivered over £30,000 of income. However, the GIS Manager recognised that the existing policy could be fairer for individual citizens and those responsible for small developments. At the same time the policy should put a greater emphasis on charging large commercial and residential developments. Last year the

policy revisions not only provided a fairer mechanism for charging, but maintained the new levels of Council income. After three months of 2014 SN&N income is £9,440.

Warwickshire Observatory was commissioned jointly by the District/County Councils, working in collaboration with a range of other statutory and voluntary sector partners, to develop a new Social Inclusion Index for the District. This highlights the extent of social exclusion in the District based on indicators including social isolation, health and wellbeing, income and labour market, housing, crime and safety. This research can be used by a wide range of partners to help target resources more effectively at a neighbourhood level and also to demonstrate need when bidding for external sources of funding.

The Warwick District Financial Inclusion Forum has been launched to ensure that partners who have a stake in tackling financial exclusion in the District work effectively together, share resources and meet a growing demand for support from residents. The Forum is focusing on several initiatives, including support for 5 Foodbanks; provision of affordable credit/tackling loan sharks; the roll out of a Free School Meal Take Up Campaign; provision of money advice and financial capability services in community venues and support for community-based Job Clubs.

Positive partnership working relationships continue with a wide range of voluntary and community sector organisations in the District as a result of the 3 year commissioning process put into place for the first time in 2012. Support is given to targeted communities in Lillington, Brunswick and Warwick West through community hubs, in addition to a District-wide debt, money management and advice service and investment in a consortium specialising in engaging with harder to reach communities. Plans are now in place to review these arrangements, with a view to conducting a major new commissioning process towards the end of this year, and considerable consultation has taken place with our voluntary sector colleagues, as well as Councillors, officers and statutory sector partners.

A review of joint District/County Council funded Community Development activity in the District was carried out, which highlighted the impact of their work in targeted neighbourhoods. This includes a demonstrable increase in involvement in community activity, and a greater sense of community spirit; people taking greater pride in their local area and an increased feeling of wellbeing, and a demonstrable increase in capacity for communities to manage and determine their future.

The Integrated Grants Scheme has been strengthened to ensure that the Member Grant Review Panel has a more strategic oversight of the impact of the range of grants totalling £65,000 per year awarded to community groups in the District to support grassroots activity. Funding sources available include the Community Forum Grant Fund, the Small Grants Scheme, Sports and Leisure and Arts and Culture Grants.

The development of a refreshed Local Councils Charter is underway, which is a mutual agreement between all 3 tiers of local government about how they will work in partnership to serve the community, which is timely with the growing importance of Localism and the opportunity for communities to take a greater role in the delivery of services.

There are 7 Community Forums in the District which meet on a quarterly basis to give residents a chance to meet their local Councillors, police and voluntary sector agencies, and to have their say about services and other issues in their locality. Residents can set Safer Neighbourhood Team policing priorities for the forthcoming 3 months at each meeting. This year a new offer has been introduced by the District Council's Neighbourhood Services Team which gives residents the opportunity to highlight areas which need cleaning up/maintenance/graffiti removal etc., which has proved to be popular in every area.

This year, the Community Partnership Team engaged an Apprentice through the national scheme, and she is contracted for 18 months as a trainee administrator/community development worker whilst studying for an NVQ Level 3 in Business and Administration.

Customer Service Centre & One Stop Shops (managed by Warwickshire County Council):

- One Stop Shop services have been aligned with the Library Service and now report into that Service structure at the County Council. Amalgamating resources has enabled us to protect service delivery for the Customer
- The Customer Service Centre (CSC) telephony system has been changed (Ctalk) which has seen some telephone number changes for the customer. The new system offers improved reporting functionality which is helping us with an Improvement Plan for the service. Significant emphasis is being placed on cross-training to ensure a fully integrated service offering in the CSC
- We have replaced the Customer Relationship Management system for both face to face and CSC. The new contract is significantly cheaper but provides functionality that is more appropriate to local authority business.
- We are looking at changes in the CSC to support payments being taken by County staff and manage business risk. Our current advice is that only WDC employed staff can take payments over the phone but we are challenging this as it is part of the reason why performance has dipped.

Website:

- The website continues to perform above the average for UK councils with 80%+ success and satisfaction rates with customers. There are over 100,000 visitors to the site a month. Higher success rates mean reduced demand on the CSC and One Stop Shops. During 2013 the website was rated in the top 20 for all UK councils by an independent assessment.

- A new system to allow updates is in place and the project to implement this was on time and on budget. This project includes redesigns for the Spa Centre and Pump Rooms websites. It also includes a mobile friendly website as 25% of visits are now from mobile devices.

Document Management Centre:

- Significant financial savings have been made as a result of the One Council approach to dealing with mail through the Document Management Centre. Examples include:
 - Volume outbound Cleanmail increased to 99% since 2011/12, now mailing minimal non Cleanmail addressed mail pieces
 - No hand written mail sent out
 - Volume outbound 1st class mail reduced significantly
 - Efficiency savings – post saved approx £8k 2012/13
 - Efficiency saving – stationery saved approx £9k 2012/13

Media:

- The Media team works with all parts of the Council. Services need to work with the team to “get their message out”. Examples of working closely with Service Areas include:
 - Local Plan
 - Bowls Championships 2014
 - Marketing Leisure Centres, Royal Spa Centre, Car Parking etc.
 - Warwick 1100
 - Electoral Register
 - Rebranding Fit For the Future
 - Twitter - We currently have 4007 followers on twitter; this has increased due to interaction on twitter through partnership events, campaigns and announcements. A majority of queries and complaints involve housing, parking, recycling with occasional road work complaints which are then directed back to Warwickshire County Council. We had a very successful campaign on twitter involving the Christmas Recycling project

EU Print Framework: This has been in place successfully for 15 months and has so far produced an estimated saving of 16.4% on externally procured print in its first year. The current print framework will be in place until October 2016.

Lessons Learned

Despite budget constraints, Warwick District Council is an ambitious authority that wants to maintain its services and to seek new opportunities for service development. This ambition, delivered through empowering its managers and staff, produces an environment of constant change.

Unfortunately there is very little change that can be undertaken in a modern working environment without there being a direct or indirect impact on the use of ICT or the ICT Service.

At one end of the spectrum a simple decision to change the way we collect rent arrears could lead to several weeks of work in rewriting recovery workflows, while the creation of new teams, such as the combined Housing & Occupational Therapists or a shared Building Control function has a major impact on infrastructure, applications and desktop services.

Equally the desire to maintain services, such as at the Spa Centre, which are not traditionally local government activities, creates challenges as many of the software suppliers to these functions are not used to delivering systems which meet the increasing security requirements of the public sector.

This desire to change and innovate, while laudable, places an increasing pressure on the ICT Service to become a reactive rather than a strategic service. Equally the ability to accommodate so many changes, often at short notice, requires the underlying infrastructure to be ever more flexible and consequently more complex and costly to maintain.

It is generally agreed that running such an extensive number of Community Forums (28 per year) may not be the most cost-effective and inclusive method of successfully engaging with residents, and trials are currently being carried out in some localities this year to reduce the number of Forum meetings, and implement on-line opportunities for people to have their say and vote for local priorities.

Some concerns have been expressed by a few County Councillors about the allocation of pooled funds to the Community Forum Grant Fund, and work is currently underway to identify a solution to this in specific areas.

Customer Measures – those important to the people/organisations who use our services

Note: these measures should be used on a daily, weekly or monthly basis to identify the impact of interventions in the system and to plan future interventions. Interventions may be very small adjustments to resources, or may involve transformational change

	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	01	02	03
% Satisfied with OSS customer service – Kenilworth	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
% Satisfied with OSS customer service – Leamington						96	97	94	87	95	95	96
% Satisfied with OSS customer service – Lillington						98	100	100	100	100	100	100
% Satisfied with OSS customer service – Warwick	81	69	75	82	71	81	88	100	100	95	95	100
% Satisfied with OSS customer service – Whitnash								100	100	100	100	100
Satisfaction levels of users of the website (%)	79	68	72	78	78	92	81	86	81	82	88	90
<i>Previous Year Satisfaction levels (%)</i>	78	83	72	78	90	88	83	74	95	76	78	80
Success rates of users of the website (%)	76	76	81	85	76	90	89	80	81	82	81	83
<i>Previous Year Success rates (%)</i>	77	83	83	75	89	94	85	77	86	80	83	80
Satisfaction with ICT service (annual; mark out of 7)	-	6.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
FFF delivery progress (% of planned target achieved)	-	-	-	x	-	-	75%	-	-	x	-	83%
Community Priorities delivered (% of priorities identified at forums delivered)	-	-	-	-	100%	-	-	100%	-	-	-	100%
Community Priorities delivered (% of priorities	-	-	-	-	0%	-	-	0%	-	-	-	x

