

Statement by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Governance

15 December 2020

ICT

Entering lockdown and ongoing advice to work from home has presented a huge challenge in mobilising staff to be able to work effectively outside of the normal office arrangements. ICT brought forward the improvement programme to rollout Office365, increasing capacity for staff and Members to access email and council systems.

A transformation in the way we work has been the implementation of Microsoft Teams, this has enabled virtual meetings to take place at a time when social distancing requirements meant the usual face to face meetings were not permitted.

Communications

Good communication has been essential throughout the Covid pandemic and Members will have noted the regular and comprehensive briefings that have kept them abreast of both operational matters and the response that the council has been providing to residents and businesses.

Campaigns have been delivered to encourage the safe use of our market towns, 'Enjoy Hambleton Safely' was used extensively on social media throughout the summer and appeared on street signage and in our local shops.

The council website has been updated and a soft launch at the beginning of December has meant the website is fully compliant with recent changes to accessibility legislation and can now be even more responsive in sharing important news with our residents and communities.

Covid 19 Support

As well as ensuring that the civic centre and other Council buildings are Covid secure, Design and Maintenance are integral to the delivery of Government strategy with regard to the use of these sites as part of the Testing regime. The focus is now on extending this support to help with the roll out of vaccinations in the area.

Car Park Improvement Scheme

Whilst significantly impeded by all the different challenges this year the delivery of this scheme will be concluded in the New Year with new machines, flexible payment by cash card and virtual means, new layout with wider parking bays ,new signage, coach parking at Bedale and ,importantly, Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

LED Lanterns

We have now seen the conclusion of a two year scheme to install over 2500 LED Lanterns across the district bringing our total number to 3400 of the total 3800 public lights. The scheme reduced the Council's energy consumption by 370,000Kwh and is saving £60,000 a year.

Work continues to convert the remaining 400 old technology lanterns.

Markets

Hambleton Markets at Thirsk and Northallerton have continued to offer socially distanced outdoor shopping experience, the temporary closure of the road through the Town has been very popular with everyone and trader numbers have increased as stall holders who normally attended trade fairs and shows in the summer have sought another outlet to sell their goods. Northallerton now has approx 50 Stall holders.

Thirsk Farmers Market is now scheduled for the first Sunday of each month.

Councillor Isobel Sanderson
Portfolio Holder for Governance