

County Council Statement

For County Councillor Chris Metcalfe

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Considerable progress has been achieved in the last few weeks to develop the corporate contact centre. Building work is complete as is equipping the centre. The first staff have arrived and are currently undergoing training and shortly the first trials will be undertaken to test the systems. We remain on track to open the centre in early April. The first calls will be Highway fault reporting such as faulty street lights, road defects and other general informational requests such as hours of opening of a library. Implementation planning for further services to be integrated in the summer and autumn is underway. Two significant elements of this will be adult and children's social care telephone calls and the telephone contact currently received at Local Education Offices.

Work is on-going to improve the e-forms on the website that allow the citizen to report highways faults through the web site by making them more user friendly. It remains an essential part of the strategy that the citizen is offered the choice of different means of access to services and the web site is a particularly attractive choice for those who have internet access, providing as it does a 24 hour a day service. It is also the most cost effective means of providing information.

Agreement has been reached with colleagues in District Councils about a network of locations to develop single points of contact for all Council Services. A joint steering group has been established to oversee the initiative and to develop further joint working in the area of providing access to services. Work will now focus on drawing services together into one place in each of these 34 locations across the county.

Our promise of service to our citizens has been refreshed and republished as a Customer Charter. This is being distributed throughout the authority and should be on display in all public facing buildings. All service teams are being encouraged to build on this by producing a local charter to reflect the local circumstances of their service and to exceed the minimum standards where possible.