

Norfolk Portal goes live

www.



The **Norfolk Portal** is up and running for people to find a huge range of information about local council services at the touch of a button.

The Portal is the new search function on our website, and on

many of the local district and borough council websites. You can now search our website for a word or phrase, and in addition to information about our own services, you also have the option to find information about Norfolk on other websites. You will also be presented with recommended links to direct you to the most frequently asked questions on the same topic.

Teresa Coldicott, a member of the Norfolk Connect Partnership who worked to establish the Portal, explains:

"Many people aren't always clear who provides their services. The new technology offered by the portal means that they will not have to know which council is responsible for which service in order to find what they are looking for. This should make it much easier for people to find their way through the complexities of local government to get the information they need more easily."

For more information, contact Teresa on (01603) 430637 or e-mail teresa.coldicott@broadland.gov.uk

Projects in the system

Some major computer systems that will help us work more effectively are in the pipeline. Here is a summary of where they are now:

- 1 Our phones and access to computers** - The main switchboard at County Hall is being replaced later this year so that we can handle the increasing number of incoming calls from the public. Over time, NCC offices around the county will also benefit from this improved phone system. Access to our computer systems will also be getting a boost with the aid of broadband technology.
- 2 HR records** - From next year, we will be able to take responsibility for our own personnel records. A more effective way of dealing with the employee payroll and our management information needs is also being developed.
- 3 Social Services client records replacement** - We will be replacing the Social Services' client database, known as ISSIS (Integrated Social Services Information System). A modern replacement will be up and running by mid-2005.

www. Do it online

From reporting faulty streetlights, to reserving library books, there are plenty of things that you can do on our website.

Why not visit www.norfolk.gov.uk to find out how to:

- **Take part in consultations**
- **Choose from the wide range** of adult education courses on offer
- **Find out about local clubs**, societies and voluntary organisations

- **Use the library catalogue** to find and reserve books, videos, CDs and more
- **Save money** - renew your library books on time online
- **Find heritage information** with NOAH (Norfolk Online Access to Heritage) by searching across the records of our archives, libraries and museums
- **Use an online form** to tell us about potholes, damaged pavements, fallen trees across

the roads, blocked drains or safety issues or broken street lights

- **Find out about planned roadworks**



Avoid the queues by going on-line before you leave home



Norfolk County Council @ your service

Feb 2004



Services set to move into the Customer Service Centre

More of our services will be moving into the Customer Service Centre soon, joining Social Services and Trading Standards.

Anna Graves, Service Improvement Manager, says: *"We are working with staff in departments to plan how more services will move into the Centre, and also to ensure that we collect the right information about each service to effectively answer people's queries."*

Our customers will call new numbers to access our services, all beginning with 0844. At the moment we have two of these numbers for Trading Standards and Social Services, and callers are charged at the cost of a local call. Our aim is to answer between 60 to 80% of people's calls at the first point of contact, without passing them through departments.

Here is an updated list of services moving into the Customer Service Centre:

Currently being introduced

General enquiries line (222222)
Street Lighting

Starting January 04

Education general enquiries
Abandoned cars and general waste
Millennium Library renewals
Enquiries about topical public issues

Starting April 04

Adult Education
Passenger Transport Unit
Staff who work in all of these services will be supported and kept informed of how this process is being managed.

For more information, contact Anna Graves on (01603) 223254 or e-mail anna.graves@norfolk.gov.uk



Staff at centre of good service

Did you know that our Customer Service Agents answer 1500 calls every week?

They offer a vital first point of contact for Social Services and Trading Standards enquiries, and with more calls coming in all the time, we make sure that new recruits are well trained and prepared to help our customers.

Two Agents with different levels of experience talk about their jobs and working environment:

Rachel Carver

"I've worked here since before the Centre first opened back in October last year. I am 'multi-skilled', which means that I can answer both Trading Standards and Social Services enquiries. The training I received to do this was very practical, with people from both services giving us information about the sort of calls we can expect to receive."



I have a user-friendly A-Z list to refer to when taking calls that is divided into the subjects that people most frequently ask about. If I don't know the answer, or people want to know something in greater depth, there is support from officers in these services that I can rely on. There is a great team-spirit here, and we all get involved in plenty of team events."

Jean Pope

"I've only worked in the Customer Service Centre for a few weeks, answering Social Services calls. During the first two weeks, I went through intensive training, which included the importance of data protection issues, confidentiality and how to offer good customer service."



This is a very supportive environment to work through, with plenty of help available from colleagues who have more experience in working here. I'm looking forward to further training in taking Trading Standards calls soon."

Focussing on FIMS

FIMS (Financial Information Management System) is set to go live later this year. In the meantime, there's plenty of preparation work to do so, as a start, here's a guide to what FIMS is about.

FIMS is both a new computer based system and a new way of working to help us become more efficient and consistent in the way we handle and use our finance information.

It will affect anyone who is responsible for ordering and paying for goods, invoicing customers and service users, recovering money or managing budgets. Staff responsible for these functions will all be using the new system and working in a completely new way to gain easier access to budget figures, and a more consistent way of recording this information across the council.

FIMS representatives, called 'Change Agents', are working in departments to make sure that the move to FIMS goes smoothly.

Speak to the following agents for more information:

Education	Tony Howard	(01603) 224425
Fire	Marina Simmonds	(01603) 810351
Finance	Gerry Baker	(01603) 224416
Chief Executives	Howard Collins	(01603) 228899
Planning & Transportation	Graham Tennant	(01603) 228904
NPS	John Child	(01603) 228971
Charles House Services	Jenny Browne	(01603) 495702
Cultural Services	Robert Testro	(01603) 223963
Social Services	Bev Woods	(01603) 223963
Corporate	Janice Dane	(01603) 222783



Meet the Change Agents - coming to a department near you

A day in the
life of a

FIMS Change Agent



Tony Howard is one of ten 'Change Agents' busy making sure that FIMS is all set to go live. Tony represents Education, and is busy working his way around the department talking to people about FIMS.

"An average day sees me visiting groups of Education staff to talk about what FIMS will mean for them. For example, I recently visited our Strategic Management Group, Sensory Support Managers, Operational Support Services and ICT Solutions all in a single day to introduce myself and explain FIMS. I have to tailor the briefings to be appropriate for each group and, so far, I am pleased to see that staff have been welcoming of the benefits that FIMS will bring."

Some of these benefits include a more consistent service for our customers and suppliers, and easier access to on-screen financial information.

"My role is primarily to raise awareness of FIMS and to help support the people who will be using it. This means plenty of face-to-face meetings to make sure staff understand how the new system will affect them."

Each department's Change Agent will be approaching the run-up to the 'go-live' date in a similar way, and all meet regularly to discuss their progress within services and to share ideas and good practice.

Q&A

Q: Why are we switching to FIMS?

A: FIMS will provide us with more efficient, consistent ways of working, while still meeting all of our different needs. This is because we will all use the same system. The system will provide information that is more up to date, easier to access and easier to understand. We will also be better placed to respond to future changes in requirements from the system, and from the information that it provides.

Q: Will everyone be affected by FIMS?

A: Staff who regularly work with budgets, customer invoicing, accounts, payments and purchasing will be directly affected as they will use new system and new way of working. We will all be indirectly affected as, for example, all of our budgets will be accessible and monitored through FIMS.

Q: So what else will be happening after FIMS goes 'live'?

A: From July, we will also start using the new 'e-Procurement' system, which is part of FIMS. This will allow us to purchase goods more effectively from an online catalogue, a bit like websites such as amazon.co.uk.

Q: I'm still not sure how this will affect me and have more questions - whom should I speak to?

A: Contact your departmental Change Agent - contact numbers are shown on the opposite page, or for general information contact Jo Quarterman on 01603 223950 or email jo.quarterman@norfolk.gov.uk

Your Norfolk your call

For the first time, people will be able to have their say and request information on a major new campaign through our Customer Service Centre.

The pilot method of consultation ties in with the 'Your Norfolk Your Say' campaign, which gives Norfolk people the chance to debate the big issues that affect the county and for these views to feed in to the 20 year plan for Norfolk, known as 'Norfolk Ambition'.

People will be able to call a new general enquiries number at our Customer Service Centre to register their views, or to request an information pack about the campaign. They can also comment online through our website or e-mail us with their opinions.

It is hoped that this will be the first of many future campaigns to make full use of the services provided by staff who work at the Customer Service Centre.

For more information, contact Anne Tansley Thomas on (01603) 222844 or e-mail anne.tansleythomas@norfolk.gov.uk

Aylsham Information centre gets plugged



Aylsham Council Information Centre is the talk of the town following its re-launch event last month.

We invited a host of local community representatives to see what the Centre does and how it helps provide vital information to local people about their council services.

A mixture of promotional posters and leaflets are now available to advertise the Centre and the services it offers: everything from bin collection dates to issuing concessionary bus passes.

The re-launch is the first of

many events to promote existing centres in Fakenham and Wroxham and new centres as they open

early this year at the Millennium Library and Gorleston Library.

Council Information

Centres offer a vital face-to-face service for people. Staff who work there are supported by a wide range of information about our services and those of district councils and other agencies.

For more information, contact Caryl Wright on (01603) 224322 or e-mail caryl.wright@norfolk.gov.uk

