

Programme Stream 7 Remodelling of Customer Services Programme – Service Migration Plan

Recommendations

That the Executive support the service migration plans outlined in this report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Central Bedfordshire Council is committed to placing the customer at the heart of all of its activities and delivery of a high quality, value for money service. The ability for customers to be able to access multiple services and achieve enquiry resolution at the first point of contact is a key part of delivering efficient service.
- 1.2 In the context of improving service, whilst reducing costs, an operational review has been undertaken in Customer Services. It has been identified that the range of services currently delivered through a Customer Services environment can be extended significantly, delivering efficiencies to the Authority and an improved customer experience.
- 1.3 Historically, the legacy Councils operated Customer Service delivery models, which were appropriate to the scale and scope of those organisations and the range of services provided. Migration and transformational plans were in existence in each of these Authorities to migrate the maximum number of appropriate services into Customer Services; however, much of this work was put on hold during the Unitary submission period.
- 1.4 The creation of a Unitary Authority has provided an opportunity to review these plans and create an operating model which meets the present and future needs of Central Bedfordshire Council.
- 1.5 Customer Services will deliver a consistent customer experience. The opportunity now exists to improve customer service by bringing in a consistent approach to enquiry handling, appointment bookings, identification of service eligibility, service assessment and simple service delivery through the Customer Services team.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1
 1. Identification and implementation of new services into Customer Services
 2. Implementation of harmonised processes for existing services within Customer Services required as a result of the creation of Central Bedfordshire Council.
 3. Fundamental Service Review of those services currently within

Customer Services not affected by harmonisation to ensure these remain fit for purpose

3.0 Reasons

- 3.1 Central Bedfordshire Council must ensure that all services are delivered in the most cost efficient way, whilst continually improving the experience of the customer interaction with us.
- 3.2 A customer wants to contact the council in the way and at a time that is most convenient to them and receive resolution of their enquiries or requests at the first point of contact. It is in the interest of the Council to make as many of these as possible available through self service on a transactional website. Many of these enquiries will span different service areas and a customer does not want to have to repeat information or be passed from one area to another.
- 3.3 Customer Services provides the same level of service across its telephony, face to face and e mail channels for the services it operates. By extending the number of services delivered in this way it will improve accessibility for the customer, whilst achieving the economies of scale of a multi skilled multi channel group of advisors.
- 3.4 Customer Services has a culture of adding value to every transaction undertaken and seeking the root cause of a customer's issue, rather than just resolving the presenting need.
- 3.5 Migration of appropriate services into Customer Services is key to supporting a consistent managed customer centric experience, as it places a wider range of solutions at the disposal of the advisor.
- 3.6 Enabling and encouraging customers to use cheaper channels, such as via the website also supports the efficiencies achievable through this programme.

4.0 Benefits

- 4.1 The benefits of migrating services into Customer Services are:
 - An improved call abandon rate.
 - Reduced call waiting time
 - Real time call management
 - Call performance statistics to guide service delivery
 - Consistent call answering processes
 - Reduced set of published numbers
 - Ability to manage surge demand
 - Increased call efficiency and value for money
 - Improved accessibility to service through established face to face Customer Service Centres

- 4.2 These have been demonstrated through previous migrations for example:
- the transfer of the Older Peoples Team reduced the call abandon rate from 47% to 3%. This did result in an increase in referrals (hidden demand) for the service and it is essential that these additional projected costs are included in the overall calculation of savings identified by any transfer.
 - The use of a larger multi skilled Customer Service Team enables events, such as the bad weather in January 2010, to support service areas when under pressure, by providing first line enquiry resolution and freeing up officer time to respond to and deal with the operational service delivery. This is evidenced by the Customer Services team responding to over 4000 enquiries relating to waste collection in the 2 weeks 4th – 15th January 2010.
- 4.3 The service migration plan supports the objectives to deliver multiple related services at the first point of contact, regardless of channel
- 4.4 Regular opportunities to review performance and service improvements through allocation of Account Managers within Customer Services to each service area
- 4.5 Quality monitoring of performance and information through implementation of call recording solutions and coaching of Customer Service staff across all channels
- 4.6 Use of specialist service area staff resource to undertake the more complex areas of their role more effectively

5.0 Proposed New services into Customer Services

5.1 Discussions with each Director have highlighted the need for an individual Directorate by Directorate approach to deliver the key objective of maximising efficiencies and improving the customer experience.

5.2 Scope

Services identified to date include

- Music service
- Children's commissioning
- Connexions
- Free school meals
- Diary management for Community Financial Advisors
- Adults with Physical Disabilities
- Adult with Learning Disabilities
- Adults with deaf / visual impairments
- Library service
- School Transport

- ICT Service desk
- HR enquiries

In addition, new services arising from the harmonisation work stream will be added to this list as this project progresses.

5.3 Approach

Following discussions with Directors,

- key contacts are identified within each service
- Meeting at Head of Service level to agree scope and approach to be taken
- Business Analysis of the current processes
- Analysis of customer experience, volumes, service levels
- Recommendations for improvements to processes
- Validation of new processes, including efficiency savings and customer benefits
- Decision whether service suitable for migration to Customer Services or, if this is not the agreed way forward, decision to implement identified efficiencies within the service area process
- Production of Business Case
- Identification of savings attributable to the service migration / process redesign. This includes budget to be removed from the service area and any budget transfer required into Customer Services if the service is to be migrated, based on process and enquiry volumes.
- Sign off of Business Case by Heads of Service in service area(s) and Customer Services
- Sign off of financial savings by respective Directors and Portfolio Holders
- Date agreed for budget transfers and savings to be taken
- Completion of Project Mandate for noting and tracking by EIG
- Production of training material
- Delivery and implementation of the service
- Production of Service Level Agreement (SLA) for services migrating to Customer Services
- Post Implementation review for services migrating to Customer Services
- Ongoing monitoring against SLA for services migrating to Customer Services
- Ongoing recommendations for further service improvements

5.4 Timescales

Each service has or will have its own project plan. It is important to recognise that, whilst essential, the service migration project is only part of the overall Customer Service remodelling programme, and timescales for implementation of new services, are dependent upon

- resources being available in Customer Services, the service area and Business Transformation

- the timescales for service harmonisation
- maintenance of service levels during training
- accessibility of systems on the Citrix network
- Commitment from the service area to implement the recommended changes to deliver the efficiencies

5.5 Indicative timescales for implementation of Free school meals, the Music service and Diary Management for Community Financial Assessors are during Quarter 3 of 2010.

Services identified within Social Care, Health and Housing have a commitment to proceed, but no implementation timescales are yet known.

Library services will be discussed with the new Assistant Director, once appointed, but commitment to review has been obtained. This service provides an example is the high abandoned rate of between 30 – 45% of telephone enquiries received directly into libraries, which is primarily due to the use of individual library telephone numbers rather than a single point of contact.

The Passenger Transport review, including Home to School Transport, which is currently ongoing will include migration of appropriate services into Customer Services to drive efficiencies and capture savings.

6.0 Migration of Harmonised services into Customer Services

6.1 Creation of Central Bedfordshire Council brought together two District Councils, each of whom were responsible for providing the same range of services, including, waste and recycling collection, Planning and Building Control, Council Tax and Benefits and, in the case of South Bedfordshire, Housing through its housing stock. Many of these services were handled by the Customer Services teams. However, the use of multiple systems and procedures mean that these services are not being delivered in a consistent and efficient way across the whole of Central Bedfordshire. The need to complete harmonisation activities as a priority to create a stable consistent platform upon which to grow and provide additional services has been identified as a key activity.

6.2 The harmonisation project within the Sustainable Communities Directorate covers many of the services above, and is being closely project managed to ensure that these anomalies and difference in processes are is rectified, with efficiencies and savings identified through that project stream. Many of these savings have already been captured in the December 2009 Executive report and will not be accounted for again through this migration plan (to avoid any double-counting). The implementation of the redesigned processes will provide Customer Services and therefore the customer with an

improved and more consistent, efficient service, and is vital to delivering a stable platform upon which to develop new services.

6.3 **Scope**

Services identified as requiring harmonisation within Sustainable Communities are

- Waste and recycling
- Public protection services
- Development management
- Building control
- Licensing services
- Parking
- Street cleansing
- Community Safety

It must be recognised that these services were not delivered equally by the Customer Services Teams in the ex District Authorities and some, for example Development Management, were not within the scope of the ex South Bedfordshire Customer Service Team. Where any harmonised processes are introduced, evaluation of existing resource attached to that skill will be carried out and additional resource budget transferred to Customer Services to cover any shortfall, in order that the same model is followed as for new services.

- 6.4 Services including those with public sector housing, e.g. domestic noise nuisance that were within the Environmental Health remit of the Districts have now transferred to Social Care, Health and Housing. Engagement will be undertaken with this area to ensure the same processes are followed as in Sustainable Communities.

Approach

- 6.5 Sustainable Communities have a Service Development Team responsible for delivery of the harmonisation project and creation of the subsequent new processes.

Customer Services is identified as a key stakeholder in the project in respect of creation and delivery of customer focussed processes and the procurement of the new Integrated Environmental Management System. (IEMS)

Work has been undertaken to map the current processes and cost these, and recommendations have been made for improvements in some key processes.

This work will be widened to cover all aspects and activities within Sustainable Communities to ensure a consistent approach to business and the customer experience is achieved.

Timescales

- 6.6 The overall project plan for Sustainable Communities is being finalised, but the indicative timescales are for this to be complete by March 2012.

Structural and staffing elements are also involved, with appropriate consultation in place to manage this aspect.

The new IEMS is proceeding through a tender process at present and contract award is due in July 2010.

Delivery of this system will enable Customer Services to operate on a single system, which will be beneficial, even before all harmonised processes are validated and implemented.

7.0 Fundamental Service Review of existing services

- 7.1 In order to ensure that all services are reviewed in line with the operating model for Customer Services, a fundamental service review is required for those services such as Highways and Blue Badges, which are not covered under the new service or harmonisation work streams

7.2 Approach

Each service will be reviewed against the SLA in place. A review of process and performance will be undertaken, using Business Analyst support if necessary, to ensure any additional savings are captured and implemented in Customer Services and the service areas.

- 7.3 New processes will be agreed and any budget transfer in or out of Customer Services made.

New SLA's will be created, against which performance will be monitored.

7.4 Timescales

This work will be completed by March 2011

8.0 Costs and savings

8.1 Costs

There is a considerable amount of officer time required to ensure all workstreams within this project are delivered within the known timescales.

There will be additional resource available in the short term, in the form of 2 Customer Service Team Managers, who will not have a team of advisors, but are vital in respect of migrating services into Customer Services, realising the efficiencies and then managing the growing team of advisors that will be required to fulfil the customer demand.

8.2 Savings

Indicative service migration savings are available, based on work previously undertaken at Bedfordshire County Council and predicted from the harmonisation work to date.

It is important to note that these figures are either up to 3 years old, or based on many assumptions and operating costs of other Authorities. Therefore realisation of these savings in real terms may exceed or fall below the figures provided.

A financial tracking mechanism will be maintained to include details of service savings, additional budget required by Customer Services, sign off and when the budget reductions will be taken by Finance.

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8.3 Summary Table

Directorate	Service	Source of information
Childrens Services	Music	Beds CC
	Children's Commissioning	
	Connexions	Beds CC
	Free School Meals	
Customer and Shared Services	ICT service desk	
	HR helpdesk	
	Revenues and Benefits	Harmonisation
Social Care, Health and Housing	Diary Management community Financial Assessors	
	Adult learning disabilities	Beds CC
	Adult Physical Disabilities	Beds CC
	Adult Deaf / visual impairment	Beds CC
	Private sector Housing	Harmonisation
Sustainable Communities	Harmonised services	Some efficiencies already taken in Sustainable Communities Remainder will not be known until more detailed process work undertaken
	Libraries	To be validated following discussion with new AD

9.0 Barriers to the project (Risk)

	Barriers	Impact	Mitigation
9.1	Services may not engage with the service migration process	All opportunities will not be identified	Strong leadership at Director level to ensure engagement
9.2	Service may not implement the new ways of working, rendering any transfer into Customer Services ineffective	Identified efficiencies will not be realised. Customer experience will not be improved	Strong leadership at Director level to ensure new processes become “business as usual”
9.3	Insufficient resource to manage multiple projects and implementation within Customer Services	Delays to implementation and realisation of efficiencies	Use of Team Manager resource in the short term and review of required resource to meet deadlines
9.4	Business Transformation do not have sufficient Analyst support to allocate to this project	Timescales will be extended Realisation of efficiencies will be delays	Prioritisation of resource to deliver the project
9.5	ICT systems not available on a single platform	Delays implementation and realisation of efficiencies	ICT representative on project board
9.6	Procurement and implementation of IEMS delayed	Full benefits of harmonised processes will not be realised	Customer Services representative on IEMS project board
9.7	“Your space” programme delayed	Teams will not be able to operate in the new structure and deliver efficiencies	Regular communication with the “your space” team

10.0 Conclusion

10.1 The migration of services into an established multi channel Customer Services Team provides opportunities to generate efficiencies and to significantly improve the customer experience

10.2 Customers will receive consistent quality responses to their enquiries, and be able to be signposted to other relevant services at a single

Appendix E – Programme Stream 7 – Service Migration Plan

point of contact

10.3 There are no external costs attached to this project

10.4 This project supports the agreed Customer Services Strategy