



Title: **Customer Service Transformation Programme Update**

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## **1 Introduction**

**1.1** This report gives a further update on the progress of the Customer Services Transformation which includes the transfer of front-facing services to Bell Street, Wigston from the main Council Offices.

**1.2** The main aims of the programme are to improve the current service by -

- The creation of a pool of trained officers that exhibit flexible and reactive skills.
- Through the use of an appropriate customer relations management (CRM) system
  - The creation of customer histories and the capture of customer feedback
  - Provide outline prompting scripts
- Updated alternatives for access to services such as
  - The completion of applications and forms online
  - By the creation of “MyAccount” giving customers direct access to their council tax account or benefit claim (for balance or next payment due queries)
  - More immediacy in the reporting of incidents such as missed bins, graffiti and housing repairs
  - Giving customers the option for assisted self serve within the contact centre.
- The creation of a new physical environment for customer contact in a more convenient location.
- The centralisation of call handling at the customer service centre (CSC) to ensure consistency, effective handovers and facilitate a reduction in the incident of avoidable contact.

## **2 Recommendations**

It is recommended that Members note the report and progress to date.

## **3 Information**

**3.1** As Members will be aware from the previous report to this committee; there are a number of work streams that make up the whole programme. Shown below is the progress on some of the initial elements.

### **3.2 Customer Service Centre (CSC) - 40 Bell Street, Wigston**

The lease negotiations for the Bell Street site have been successfully completed with the lease being signed in May 2015.

The lease was signed on the following basis and is detailed below as a reminder having been reported to this committee previously.

- A 6 year lease with an option to break after 3 years
- A 3 month rent free period in year 1 and in year 4 if the option to continue is taken.
- Rental of £23,500 per annum for the first 3 years rising to £25,000 for the last 3 years.
- Including the use of parking spaces to the rear of the premises dedicated to people with disabilities.

The building works and fitting out of the centre have been tendered with Oliveti Construction Ltd proving to be the successful contractor with a bid of £120,000. The work, under the supervision of Ridge, has commenced and is progressing well.

A plan showing the layout of the new facility is provided at Appendix 2.

The centre will also have the facility to take cheques, debit and credit cards. There will be a facility to pay by cash through the cash kiosk which is being re-located from the Council Offices to the CSC.

### **3.3 Software**

#### CRM

The CRM software has been procured from Firmstep Ltd and has been loaded into test. It is currently being tailored to the Council's needs with a number of e-forms being written and configured. These are being written after consultation with front line services.

The implementation has been split into two phases with the first phase running from April to the opening of the Bell Street Customer Services Centre. This phase will ensure that the functionality required to ensure the centre can run smoothly and efficiently is in place.

The second phase which will run from October 2015 to January 2016 with the aim of increasing efficiency by further integration of the CRM system with other back office systems such as the Orchard housing management system and the Academy revenues and benefits systems. This phase will also encompass the upgrade and improvement of online access to services by residents.

#### IDOX/Uniform

Running concurrently with the above implementation, a new version of the document management system is being implemented which will be integrated with the CRM. To date, the Planning Service has been upgraded with other services such as Revenues, Benefits, Finance and Community to follow.

### Telephony

Plans are under way to both centralise the main telephony contact centre at Bell Street and to re-configure the system for use with services to both increase efficiency in call answering and add to the objective of “right first time”.

## **3.5 Staff Issues and Consultation**

Both the formal and informal consultation periods on the changes to the establishment have now taken place which were followed by a period of recruitment to the new Public Liaison and Technical Officer posts from both the internal pool of available staff and external candidates. The recruitment process is now complete and staff recruited from outside the organisation will start in tranches; mid and the end of July allowing for a period of induction and training.

A comprehensive training plan for the CSC has been developed by managers and team leaders from all Council services lead by the Customer Services Manager.

Over the medium term, the shift of functions from the back to the front office and the method that resident’s choose to make contact with the Council will result in efficiency savings to the Council.

## **3.6 Standards for Service Delivery**

A customer services charter was presented to the Customer Services Working Group for approval.

The approved charter is as follows:

**Our customers are important to us and we want to provide you with the best service we can.**

- We aim to achieve a satisfaction rating of over 95% and we will continuously monitor our performance to ensure we meet this.
- When you telephone us, we aim to answer your call within 20 seconds (6 rings) and we will give you our name.
- When you write to us, we aim to respond in 5 working days.

- When you attend an appointment at our Customer Service Centre our aim is that you will wait no longer than 10 minutes from your appointment time.
- When we visit you in your home our officers will identify themselves with an identity card.

### **3.7 Project Timetable and Further Phases**

The original project plan proposed an opening for the new CSC in July. However, that opening date has now moved to mid September to ensure that sufficient staff resource is available to both train the intake of staff and to ensure that all the necessary e-forms required by the software system can be created and processes established that will make the new centre function efficiently.

The opening of the new centre will very much be the first phase of the transformation with later stages leading to the centre contributing to other services which it will take on, resulting in reviews to the back office functions and further value for money efficiency savings. Further phases will review the provision of services to residents in other parts of the borough in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

An achievable new opening date for the Customer Services Centre is 14 September 2015.

### **3.8 Financial Implications**

Appendix 1 shows the latest relevant projected cost positions for both revenue and capital.

The current capital cost projection shows a total cost of £263,000 which can be accommodated within previously approved capital funding and Oadby and Wigston's share of the "Transformation Challenge Award" funding which has now been approved by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The projected revenue position shows, initially, an increase in net cost mainly due to one-off costs such as redundancy. However, the second year shows a reduction in increased costs. Future phases and review will show further reductions in costs based on the front loaded investment in both facilities and software together with sound business process re-engineering.

<b>Implications</b>	
Equalities	An EIA has been undertaken
Financial (PL)	Included within the body of the report
Legal (AC)	No significant implications and Council's policies and procedures have been followed on procurement and HR matters.
Risk (PL)	CR1 Decreasing financial resources CR4 Reputation damage

### Relevant Capital Costs

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>
Telephones	1,954
Computer / Laptop	10,160
Self Serve terminals	2,750
Additional I T licenses	9,700
CRM, online e-forms and "MyAccount"	85,000
Building – works, fixtures, fittings and furniture	136,710
Building Works Contingency	7,590
Consultants Fee	9,105
<b>Total</b>	<b>262,969</b>

<b>Funding</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>From Approved Capital Programme</b>	
- Contact Centre	157,000
- CRM	45,000
<b>Grant Funding (TCA Grant)</b>	<b>60,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>262,000</b>

### Relevant Revenue Costs

Additional revenue costs per year would include:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Year 1 £</b>	<b>Year 2 £</b>
NNDR Payable	10,090	11,000
Annual Rental	15,670	23,500
Multi Functional Devices	2,350	3,530
CRM Licences and Maintenance	40,200	40,200
IT Link to Main Offices	2,880	2,880
IT Support (Additional Site)	3,750	3,750
Salary Savings	(27,250)	(40,870)
Termination Costs	50,000	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>97,690</b>	<b>43,990</b>

Note: Year 1 costs are pro-rata part year costs where appropriate.

Year 2 costs do not include at this stage any savings that may be delivered from back office processes which will materialise as a result of business process re-engineering.