



<b>Service Delivery Committee</b>	<b>Tuesday, 19 January 2016</b>	<b>Matter for Information</b>
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**Title: Customer Services Transformation - Progress Report**

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## **1. Introduction**

This report provides an update for Members on the progress of the Customer Service Transformation programme since the opening of the Council's new Customer Service Centre at 40 Bell Street, Wigston.

## **2. Recommendations**

That Members note the information provided within the report.

## **3. Information**

**3.1.** In order to meet the Council priorities of protecting front line services and delivering efficiency savings to meet continuing budget cuts it has been necessary for the Council to continuously review its services, organisational structure, processes and culture. One major area that was identified in 2014 in this respect was Customer Services and the way that the Council greets, deals with, assists and otherwise involves itself with members of the public as well as the internal processing of information amongst its staff.

**3.2.** Phase One of the Customer Services Transformation project saw the successful opening of the new Customer Services Centre at 40 Bell Street, Wigston on 12 October 2015.

### **3.3. Progress to Date**

In the initial 8 weeks of operation (12 Oct – 5 Dec) the new Centre has dealt with:

- Face to Face visitors, 2,290; and
- Telephone callers, 3,927.

With the IT investment, detailed statistics can be produced and since the opening, the statistical information demonstrates that the change in location to a town centre has increased face to face contact significantly. In the first month of opening there was a 31 % increase in full enquiries and 57% increase in quick enquiries. An example of the monthly statistics breakdown is attached as at Appendix 1. The upward trend of increased face to face contact has continued.

The service has also implemented a totally electronic method of referring enquiries to 15 other services in the Council. The use of this DASH (dashboard) system has allowed measurement of the enquiries both dealt with by Customer Services and referred back to these Service Areas.

The largest numbers of interactions are in the following areas:

- Housing, 1,618;
- Waste Management, 1,570;
- Benefits, 847 (nearly all face to face, as most telephone calls remain with the back office);
- Council Tax and Business Rates, 650 (as with Benefits, most phone calls remain with the back office);
- Client Services (Cleansing etc.), 465;
- Environmental Health, 386;
- Planning and Building Control, 155;
- Licensing, 123; and
- Electoral Services, 79.

**3.4.** Phase 1 of the project consisted of the following deliverables:

- Brand new Customer Services Centre open to the public:-
  - 1 Meet and Greet desk;
  - 3 Self Service PCs;
  - 3 Face to Face desks for Customers to speak to staff;
  - 2 Private interview rooms;
  - 1 Payment kiosk (to take cash and card payments);
  - 10 desk Telephone Call Centre; and
  - 1 “Hot Desk” room.
- Saturday morning opening;
- Late night Wednesday opening; and
- New telephone call centre – supported by a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system supplied by Firmstep & intelligent call routing / queuing system supplied by Lloyds Telecom.
- The recruitment and training of:-
  - 1 Customer Services Supervisor post;
  - 8 new Technical Officer posts (1 more currently undergoing training);
  - 6 Public Liaison Officer posts (2 more currently undergoing training).
- The development of:-
  - 145 electronic forms and processes; and
  - 139 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to assist in service delivery.

**3.5.** The trial of late night Wednesday opening demonstrated that there was little demand with very low footfall. In view of this, with the little value to residents and the costs of operating, late night Wednesday opening ceased on 6 January 2016.

**3.6.** There is provision within the Centre for Partners to hold surgeries. The Police, Women’s Aid, Money Advice are all utilising the premises and the Citizen’s Advice Bureau will be doing so shortly.

The second phase of the transformation project to commence shortly will be to deliver

- Online forms for customers to use in place of calling or visiting the Customer Service Centre;
- The ability to pay for services in the same form as requesting that service (online);
- A My Account facility to allow Customers to check balances and make adjustments to their details; and

- Integration with a number of back office systems to remove “double keying” operations and unnecessary phone calls, visits or correspondence with the Council. Not only improving the customer experience, but reducing wasteful use of Council resources.

3.7. Implementing the project required significant workloads on a very small team of people for which they are to be congratulated on delivering the new Service which has been very well received with high levels of use and many compliments on the way it operates.

3.8. A service continues to be delivered from Oadby Library from 10 am to 1 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday (the library is closed on Thursdays). Over the last 12 months there has been reliability issues accessing the Council’s IT systems from the library which affects service provision for users and duplication of work. To improve the situation so that residents in Oadby who choose to access services from the library will receive an effective service there will be upgrading to a point to point network link. This will be the same type of connection that has been installed at the Bell Street Centre.

#### 4. Other Town Centre Matters

4.1. A trial of full pedestrianisation of Bell Street, Wigston commenced in mid-December following a consultation exercise that demonstrated public support for the move. The trial will be up to 18 months. All vehicles are excluded from the area 24 hours a day as part of continued work to enhance the visitor experience in the town.

4.2. Christmas lights schemes were in all 3 town centres over the recent festive period. Overall these were successful and work will now commence on planning for the 2016 lights. There were some issues that will be addressed for the future, such as securing the cone tree in the Oadby centre and addressing some lighting failure in South Wigston, subject to budget additional tree lighting will be put in place and the need for extra power supplies in all centres, be explored.

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<b>Implications</b>	
Financial	There is budgetary provision for the customer services transformation.
Legal	No significant implications.
Risk	CR1 - Decreasing financial resources. CR4 - Reputation damage.
Equalities	No significant implications.