

CAPITA



**Knowledge and Information
Management Strategy for
Carlisle City Council's
Customer Contact Centre Initiative**

May 2004

Draft v4.0

CONTENTS

1	CONTEXT OF THE STRATEGY	3
1.1	Introduction.....	3
1.2	What is a Knowledge and Information Management Strategy?.....	3
1.3	Developing a Common Language for the K&IMS.....	3
1.4	Why manage knowledge?	4
1.5	Stakeholders.....	4
1.6	Where does Knowledge and Information Management fit in?	5
2	THE KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION STRATEGY	6
2.1	Scope.....	6
2.2	Approach	6
2.3	Guiding Knowledge Management Principles	7
2.4	Current Knowledge and Information Management Situation.....	8
2.5	Knowledge and Information Needs	8
2.6	Knowledge Management Priorities	8
3	ACTION PLAN	12
3.1	Supporting Knowledge And Information Structure	13
3.2	Risks and Issues	13
	APPENDIX A - KNOWLEDGE DEFINITIONS	14
	APPENDIX B – KEY STAKEHOLDERS	17
	APPENDIX C – APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THIS STRATEGY	19
	APPENDIX D – CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	23
	APPENDIX E – FUTURE KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS	27
	APPENDIX F - SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION STRUCTURE	29
	APPENDIX G - RISKS AND ISSUES	32

I CONTEXT OF THE STRATEGY

1.1 Introduction

The Council is making a significant investment in the Customer Contact Centre and is determined to radically improve the quality of the services that it delivers to its customers. The Council's ambition is to provide the staff who will be delivering services in the Contact Centre with the information and knowledge that will enable them to resolve up to 80% of all customer enquiries at the first point of contact. Information will therefore need to be accurate, relevant and routinely up to date if aspirations are to be satisfied.

The Knowledge and Information Management Strategy therefore sets out needs, priorities and plans for managing Knowledge and Information in the Customer Contact Centre.

1.2 What is a Knowledge and Information Management Strategy?

This Knowledge and Information Management Strategy (K&IMS) is a framework that describes how Carlisle City Council will manage knowledge and information for the benefit of the Contact Centre and its stakeholders. The K&IMS is closely aligned with the overall Customer Service Strategy and its associated objectives.

1.3 Developing a Common Language for the K&IMS

What is knowledge management?

Knowledge management is a process that will help Carlisle City Council find, select, organise, disseminate and transfer the information and expertise that is critical for the delivery of the Council's business. For example, a coherent and consistently applied K&IMS will significantly improve the Council's decision making capabilities together with delivering benefits in areas such as problem solving and strategic planning.

In order for Carlisle City Council to discuss or act on improving their approach to knowledge and information management (K&IM), they have developed a common language that will enable them to be confident that they are talking about the same things when addressing K&IM issues. The key definitions in respect of their approach to data, information and knowledge at this stage are detailed below. Other agreed definitions can be found in Appendix A.:

The working definition for “Data” is:

- words, facts, figures and statistics not placed in context

The working definition for “Information” is:

- an understanding of the relationships between pieces of data, or between pieces of data and other information (this has a tendency to be relatively static in time)

The working definition for “Knowledge” is:

- information that has been absorbed and applied in specific areas which Carlisle City Council understand, use and have learned

Information becomes knowledge when information is used appropriately by someone as part of carrying out their role in the organisation, whether that is providing a simple, appropriate and accurate piece of information to a customer or making difficult choices between strategic priorities. Knowledge is very closely linked to learning.

1.4 Why manage knowledge?

A robust K&IMS will help Carlisle City Council to:

- increase awareness and understanding of knowledge and information management in support of the Contact Centre initiative and will help to support the wider needs of Carlisle City Council
- provide Carlisle City Council with a clear and unambiguous outline of where they are now, where they want to go, and how they plan to get there
- ensure that people have the tools they need to do their jobs
- encourage informed decision making at all levels and help Carlisle City Council to reduce costs
- link closely to performance management and give Carlisle City Council a basis against which to measure their progress

1.5 Stakeholders

The focus of the K&IMS is meeting the needs of customers and staff. The stakeholders have different needs in terms of content, presentation and accessibility and although these may change over time, Carlisle City Council needs to be clear as

to what they are now so that they may address them. Appendix B outlines the stakeholder groups who are key to the development of this strategy and captures the questions that were asked in respect of the approach to Content, Accessibility and Systems.

1.6 Where does Knowledge and Information Management fit in?

Contact Centres operate in an information rich environment where rapid change is taking place and customer value is paramount.

This K&IMS details how knowledge creates customer value, how that value supports an efficient service model and how staff will deliver value effectively. It supports multiple channels of user access and will be easily accessible to all staff through placing the knowledge base on a self-service website or similar alternative. In short, the K&IMS will make a significant contribution to helping Carlisle City Council to achieve their service enhancement aspirations across a number of critical areas, including the objectives detailed below.

The objectives for Customer Service include:

- consistent levels and standards of customer service
- improved accessibility of services for all customers
- joined up services from the customer point of view
- improved resource management
- increased 'one and done' at the first point of customer contact
- to continually improve

The Customer Service Delivery Model will:

- have fewer telephone numbers and customer access points
- deliver consistent services through multiple customer contact channels
- be managed as one team
- be the front end for all services
- define and management service standards
- achieve one and done targets – 80% of enquiries resolved at first point of contact

2 THE KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION STRATEGY

2.1 Scope

The primary focus of the K&IMS is on the management and delivery of customer facing services in the Council. The strategy therefore lays a heavy emphasis on the knowledge, information and data management requirements associated with the implementation and ongoing operational delivery of the Contact Centre.

Although the K&IM strategy highlights issues and suggestions relevant to the Council as a whole, these have not been pursued at this time but are noted for future action. What this strategy does not consider in any depth are the management information needs of wider services and the corporate whole, except insofar as these relate to customer accessibility and front line performance. Similarly, the strategy does not consider the operational information and data management needs of specialist service ('back office') teams.

2.2 Approach

A series of workshops were held with:

- senior management
- middle management
- front line staff

These workshops were designed to raise the awareness of knowledge and information management and promote an understanding of how it can be used in the management of the Contact Centre.

In addition a knowledge and information management audit was carried out by the Customer Services Manager and Information Officer. This is due for completion by the end of May and findings will be included in an updated version of the strategy. The audit is also supported by the evidence evolving from the BPR exercise.

More details of the approach can be found in Appendix C.

2.3 Guiding Knowledge Management Principles

At a senior management workshop on the 30th March, the group explored and agreed the following 8 principles that will be used to shape the way in which Carlisle City Council manage Knowledge and Information in the Contact Centre:

1. Information/ data will only be recorded once within the Council, repurposing it to meet the needs of different audiences
2. Each piece of information/ data will:
 - a. be the responsibility of a specific defined individual responsible for maintaining its accuracy and currency
 - b. be time limited (we will record, for each piece of information, how long it can be assumed to be accurate; systems will flag when the information is due for review and those responsible notified that they need to review it; when accessed the user should be able to see whether the information is still accurate, or if appropriate the information should be removed from the system until review)
 - c. contain data about when it was created/ last reviewed, review due date, owner, source (where appropriate)
3. Access to all information/ data will be controlled. This will mean that there will be a need to control the ability to create, edit and read data; and shape the security arrangements appropriately to ensure confidentiality, compliance to Data Protection Act, and Freedom of Information etc
4. All possible knowledge will be captured into systems that are designed to ensure immediate accessibility to all those that need it
5. Processes for ensuring that knowledge that can not be captured in systems is shared will be put in place
6. Details of the type of knowledge available, and how to find and use it, through a single source (i.e. our Intranet) and link it to learning and development will be made available
7. Knowledge and Information management will be addressed specifically in all performance management processes (e.g. corporate strategies and plans; service improvement plans; and through our appraisals)
8. Audiences/ intended users will be consulted on the best approach to organising and presenting knowledge and information

2.4 Current Knowledge and Information Management Situation

In order to implement the Knowledge Management principles the Council's current situation has been assessed with a view to identifying those areas in need of improvement. The key output of this exercise has been the establishment of a list of priority actions that are now required to deliver the principles. The output from this assessment is detailed in Appendix D.

2.5 Knowledge and Information Needs

In addition to the audit of the current position, the future Knowledge and Information needs have been mapped for each key area of the business once the Contact Centre becomes operational, namely:

- frontline contact centre staff
- frontline contact centre service managers
- strategic management
- back-offices

Further information relating to the needs of these groups can be found in Appendix E.

2.6 Knowledge Management Priorities

Having assessed the current position, identified future needs and established the fundamental K&IMS Principles, it is essential that the Council is equipped with a clear understanding of the priority themes and related issues that now need to be considered as they move towards actively delivering the strategy. Priorities have been grouped under the following headings:

- knowledge and information priorities
- performance management
- monitoring and review
- continuous improvement

Knowledge and Information Priorities

The Council needs to:

- develop a system for keeping knowledge and information up-to-date, accurate and relevant. For example, 'date stamp' each piece of information with an expiry date.
- define the core data sets and put in place arrangements to manage them corporately. This needs to include the development of an approach to data cleansing and the routine updating of information used to populate the corporate Knowledge Base
- develop a culture of "right first time" rather than take risks with out of date and inaccurate information
- ensure staff have the time to learn and share knowledge and information
- ensure that the Council has effective communication with its staff and customers
- consider how the Contact Centre can best help the Council to achieve its statutory obligations by maximising the use of the resource to its corporate advantage.
- agree how far the Council will provide information and services on behalf of other authorities. The Council recognises that sometimes it is quicker to answer enquires at the frontline rather than transfer a call. This approach also promotes better customer service.
- discuss how to continue to fund development over time by developing a financial strategy based on the production of costed business cases.
- provide detailed management information about what the Council's customers are asking us to do. This will help the Council to identify what is and what is not working.
- co-ordinate consultation activities across the Council with a view to gaining a clearer understanding of how the Contact Centre can support future initiatives (e.g. local plan)
- ensure the accuracy of completed applications being returned (e.g. licensing)
- actively manage customers' expectations rather than being reliant on Back Office intervention

- establish how the Council can introduce and manage electronic signatures
- ensure that the Council continually finds out its customers' knowledge and information needs by maximising the use of the knowledge management tools that will be introduced into the Contact Centre (this will include the Access Officer consulting with the Disability Group)
- present and publish information in a way that is accessible, acceptable and communicates effectively. The Contact Centre will work with relevant business units to establish that the right questions are being asked

Performance Management

The Council will link its K&IMS to performance management in the following ways:

- Back office service managers will commit to short term service improvement trials that are predicated on realistic targets and other measures of improvement.
- it is essential that the Council keeps customers satisfied by keeping them informed at all times. When dealing with an enquiry the Council will, where possible, give an indication of timescales, what will happen next, who will be contacting them, etc. The Council will manage its customers' expectations and ensure that it does not over promise.
- The Council will measure performance through customer surveys, customer and back office feedback, management information (time taken to answer the phone/ queue) and informal chats with customers in the waiting area
- The Council will investigate shared Mystery Shopper exercises with a neighbouring authority to assess performance

Monitoring and Review

The Council will review and update information by:

- nominating Contact Centre Liaison Officers who will undertake a monthly review of the various types of traffic flowing through the Contact Centre with a view to establishing service enhancement priorities with relevant back offices.

- all relevant and appropriate knowledge and information will be accessible on a self service basis either on the intranet (to be developed) or another similar environment
- a Knowledge Base Officer will be nominated in each service to liaise with the Corporate Information Officer.
- FAQ's will be emailed for updates on a regular basis and an audit will be carried out periodically as to what is held on each service. The information will be checked and updated by the Knowledge Base Officer in each service. The Business Units will be responsible for checking accuracy of all knowledge and information

Continuous Improvement

The Council will keep staff engaged in 'how' to do things better in the following ways:

- by planning more time for training and development thereby developing a learning environment and minimising service delivery risks. Training will include work shadowing, 6 monthly update training, specialist training, briefings and keeping staff up to date with latest thinking.
- by constantly striving for service improvement advantages by removing unnecessary steps in those activities delivered by the Contact Centre
- by embracing the principle that knowledge and information is not just about systems but includes performance, communication and review. As such, the Council will be committed to developing an environment which promotes learning amongst all staff and which values the transfer of relevant and accurate information and knowledge.

3 ACTION PLAN

The action plan detailed below maps out the steps that are necessary to deliver this K&IMS as the project moves into the implementation phase.

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Put in place arrangements to create a strategic forum for driving customer services forward in the Council as suggested in Appendix F	Executive Director and Programme Manager	To be agreed
Develop critical success factors for measuring the success of the K&IMS	Executive Director and Programme Manager	To be agreed
Define core data sets for the Knowledge Base	Customer Services Manager and Corporate Information Officer	To be agreed
Decide which Knowledge Base tool will be required to deliver information to Customer Service Advisers	Programme Manager and Corporate Information Officer	To be agreed
Audit current information and knowledge	Corporate Information Officer and Knowledge Base Officers	To be agreed
Cleanse the information and knowledge before populating into the Knowledge Base	Corporate Information Officer and Knowledge Base Officers	To be agreed
Develop and populate the chosen Knowledge Base	Customer Services Manager and Corporate Information Officer	To be agreed
Carry out a quality check on the Knowledge Base before "Go live"	Corporate Information Officer	To be agreed
Assess statutory requirements (and insert into Appendix F)	Corporate Information Manager	To be agreed

Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Develop Intranet	Head of Customer and Information Services	To be agreed
Develop Performance Management Systems, including competency framework, skills matrix, training plan	Executive Director and Head of HR	To be agreed
Develop quality measures and standards for the Contact Centre and establish baseline	Customer Services Manager	To be agreed

3.1 Supporting Knowledge And Information Structure

In order to successfully implement this Knowledge and Information Strategy, the Council will put in place a robust and constructive structure. This structure will incorporate the necessary roles and responsibilities, and a performance management structure with realistic, achievable Critical Success Factors. These are outlined in Appendix F.

3.2 Risks and Issues

The Council will encounter various risks and issues if they do not implement the Knowledge and Information Strategy. Some of the most concerning risks and issues have been outlined in Appendix G and it is advised that the Council reviews these risks in line with its risk management plan.

APPENDIX A - KNOWLEDGE DEFINITIONS

Data

“Of little value in its own right Out of context Without a meaningful relationship to anything else ...”

The Senior Management Team thought of the following...

- Information not placed in context
- Recorded facts and figures
- Facts, figures and statistics
- Raw facts
- Words, numbers, records without context
- Raw material – numbers collected

Data has little value on its own. It needs to be combined with other data to generate information. Examples of data include:

- An address in a database
- A GIS code
- A number in a spreadsheet

Information

“Not just a collection of dataInformation is quite simply an understanding of the relationships between pieces of data, or between pieces of data and other information Information has a tendency to be relatively static in time and linear in nature”

The groups suggestions were:

- In context and meaningful
- Unapplied and general

-
- Accumulated into a useable format
 - Added value to other facts
 - Process stuff related to other data
 - Data with value added in order to make decisions (by putting in context/processing data)

Information has value only when it is presented to someone at a place and time, and in a form in which they can use it. Examples of information:

- A management report, e.g. performance indicators or budget monitoring reports
- A procedure
- The contact details for a partner organisation

Knowledge

“Not just a collection of information Understanding the implications of information and knowing how to use it to achieve desired results Plus practical expertise”

The Senior Management Team considered *knowledge* to be:

- Ability to understand and use and learn
- Applied in specific areas
- Application of information
- Something learned
- Information that has been absorbed
- Techniques, methods and processes for making decisions

Knowledge generates value when someone uses or applies information correctly in a specific situation to support decisions and action; knowledge is typically a

combination of a number of pieces of information and a persons' expertise. Examples of knowledge:

- Which performance indicator information to use to help in deciding how well a service is performing and how to use the information to decide how to achieve more improvement
- Which information is most appropriate to meet a customer's needs and how to communicate that effectively to the customer so that they can use it
- How to construct a budget that conforms to the Council's conventions and meets all the needs of the service concerned

APPENDIX B – KEY STAKEHOLDERS

The Senior Management Team defined its customers and stakeholders as including:

External	Internal
The public	Customer services operational staff
Older people	Customer Services Management
People with communication difficulties	Strategic Management
Elected members	Departmental service operational staff
Businesses	Departmental service management
Visitors	Information management
IT Services	Systems management

It is essential that staff all work together in a joined up way to ensure that they deliver Excellence in Service Delivery and manage relationships effectively. Below the issues addressed by this strategy around Content, Accessibility and Systems from a Stakeholder perspective have been outlined.

Content

- what should be included is it included, is it accurate, consistent & up to date?

Accessibility

- do people know the knowledge and information is there, do they know how at find it, are they allowed to access it?
- do they know how to use it, is it in a form they can use, do the systems containing it promote its use?
- are people encouraged to share new knowledge and information?

Systems

- does the Council have the ICT and people based, formal and informal processes and tools for collecting, storing, manipulating and delivering

information and knowledge and for ensuring that it remains up to date and accurate?

A major issue in Contact Centres is timely access by staff to information to help them fulfil customer needs. This, especially in the early days of a centre, adds significant time to the length of a call and frustration to the customer.

Often, knowledge is widely and unequally distributed within the minds of staff. As staff members leave, a certain amount of knowledge goes with them. It is essential that a culture of sharing of information and knowledge is developed and potential is harnessed and celebrated.

A knowledge-base solution ultimately enhances the customer's experience. The ideal knowledge and information base is accessed and easily understood by staff, using a minimum of effort. It is able to build dynamically and to import answers to new problems, questions and issues that arise.

Effective knowledge management will be the backbone of the contact centre. It will help our staff to take ownership of enquiries and increase customer satisfaction.

APPENDIX C – APPROACH TO DEVELOPING THIS STRATEGY

I. SCOPE

The focus of the knowledge management strategy project was on knowledge, information and data management associated with the contact centre and its implementation. It focused on customer facing services and the management of those elements of services. Although the knowledge management strategy project highlighted issues and suggestions relevant to the Council as a whole, these were not pursued within this project, but are noted for future action.

What the project considered in any depth was the management information needs of wider services and the corporate whole, except insofar as these related to customer accessibility and front line performance, or the operational information and data management needs of specialist service ('back office') teams.

2. AIMS OF APPROACH

The overall objective of the project was to articulate and agree a knowledge management strategy for the contact centre. The approach aimed specifically to:

- raise awareness of knowledge and information management issues, what knowledge is and what knowledge management is all about
- promote understanding of how knowledge and information can be used in the management of the contact centre to ensure continuous improvement
- enable achievement of the Council's customer service and e-government objectives
- enable high quality and consistent front line service delivery in the contact centre
- inform more detailed development of content management and delivery, and software build
- deliver common terminology and agreed principles to underpin CCC's future knowledge management activity
- engage staff at all levels in the contact centre implementation process
- provide clear links between knowledge and information management and performance management

The approach was based on the premise that knowledge, information and data are elements of the same key resource that need to be managed through a fully integrated framework.

3. APPROACH

In broad terms the proposed approach:

- identified the contact centre's knowledge and information needs
- audited existing knowledge and information systems and processes
- analysed the gaps
- produced a knowledge and information management strategy including an action plan for meeting the identified needs of the contact centre

A workshop based approach was adopted in order to ensure that the project contributed to the staff engagement aims of the contact centre implementation, and to maximise value for money. As such this needs to be linked clearly into the Council's contact centre communications and stakeholder engagement strategy.

Overview of approach:

- agreed scope and broad knowledge management draft principles with project sponsor
- delivered senior management workshop covering:
 - What knowledge management is about
 - Definitions of knowledge, information and data
 - Discussion and agreement of knowledge and information management principles (these would apply to all Council knowledge management)
 - Painting the big picture - Exploration of the broad objectives of contact centre and how these relate to knowledge and information needs of different stakeholders, particularly focusing on management information needs and links to performance management (prompt people to think about the issues and opportunities prior to second workshop)
 - Initial ideas re knowledge management roles and responsibilities
 - Commitment to providing the audit information required

- delivered front line staff workshop covering:
 - What knowledge management is about in relation to operational service delivery
 - How the contact centre will operate
 - The future knowledge and information needs of multi service, multi skilled contact centre staff
 - Existing issues and problems of front line staff that can be addressed through improved knowledge and information management
 - How to make knowledge and information accessible
- audited current knowledge and information systems and processes, and roles and responsibilities
 - Agree templates
 - Agree responsibilities for providing information not available through existing project activity
 - Distribute templates
 - Receive and collate information
 - Draft audit section of strategy
- the second senior management workshop covered:
 - Definition of the knowledge and information that will be available through the new systems and exploration of what managers might use that for in the context of the contact centre and the Council's wider objectives
 - Further exploration of knowledge and information management needs based on thinking since first workshop
 - Broad specification of needs
 - Recommended corporate approach to knowledge management roles and responsibilities
 - Key systems issues that may need to be addressed
- draft management and operational knowledge and information needs and consult with workshop groups to confirm
- gap analysis
- preparation of draft strategy

-
- consult on draft and amend strategy
 - present strategy as agreed

4. KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

People need to understand fully what the aims of the contact centre are and how knowledge and information will contribute to that. In particular, for example:

- how will the Council make use of the significant amount of data available through the CRM system (and the implications of this for what needs to be captured)?
- how will that information be used for promoting particular services?
- how will managers use the new knowledge about customer use of different services and how will this feed into service planning etc?
- how will managers use the additional knowledge available to manage customer behaviour proactively? For example, how can this support channel migration objectives?
- what are the Council's core data sets and which issues need to be considered about how to manage those effectively?
- how will the Council address Data Protection, Freedom of Information, and Disability Discrimination requirements?
- ICT dependencies and limitations
- which elements of the roadmap are critical for the contact centre "Go live" and how will these be progressed?
- how will customer knowledge and information need be assessed and incorporated into the strategy (e.g. for web self service presentation)?

APPENDIX D – OUR CURRENT KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Front line Staff

Front line staff access and develop knowledge and Information in a number of ways and no one consistent approach exists for everyone.

Staff are encouraged to share information only in some areas, and this varies considerably from section to section. The level of knowledge and information sharing tends to rely on individual personalities (e.g. Switchboard staff are known to be proactive in sharing).

Examples of effective knowledge and information sharing practices exist and need to be rolled out more widely across the organisation. Revenues and Benefits information changes frequently due to legislative changes, and there is a need to update the team constantly. This happens through training, team briefings, one-to-one meetings with part-timers and working closely with the back office. Revenues & Benefits staff benefit from a structured approach to identifying the skills needed to carry out their jobs. This is supported by a skill matrix linked in to training plans.

All front line staff receive some form of induction, customer care training and training on the IT systems they need to use. They also have access to corporate courses which include training on telephone techniques and how to deal with difficult customers. The Council will need to define the minimum training requirement for all contact centre staff, and ensure that attendance on optional courses is managed consistently to meet the overall needs of the Council.

Several of the front line staff have been working with the Council for many years. They have built up their knowledge and information through experience and working with other colleagues. They effectively act as knowledge repositories. Staff are reliant on individuals who are not always accessible and their knowledge and information is lost to the authority when a member of staff leaves. Staff are also reliant on individuals sharing knowledge and information and this can cause problems if information is not updated as things change.

Staff demonstrate initiative and a willingness to develop their knowledge and information by seeking out opportunities and gathering information e.g. press cuttings, literature, internal magazine. The Revenues and Benefits staff report that the Dip and Workflow works really well and is very useful in terms of retrieving knowledge and information.

Front line staff encounter problems from time to time which include accessing information, not being kept informed when information has been updated/and or is

out of date. Some staff prefer to use paper notes which can not be updated or shared widely. Front line staff also feel they are often the last to find out about things, e.g. the automated paying line was down and they were flooded with calls, no one told the front line staff in advance - they were informed by the customer.

Some customers treat the Council's face-to-face customer services as a reception meaning that they struggle to deliver any service other than signposting. An example of this is the "Jim and Barry" situation mentioned at the Middle Managers' workshop on Friday 7th May. Taxi drivers request to see either Jim or Barry in Licensing personally with their enquiries and will not accept a Front line member of staff helping them. The Council needs to encourage the back offices to empower the Contact Centre and transfer services to the front line staff where appropriate to resolve enquiries rather than referring immediately to the back office staff.

The Foyer staff use a simple frequently asked questions (FAQ) knowledge base to access information. They rely heavily on the accuracy and completeness of the information included. It can be difficult to find the information even if it is there. Staff report having difficulties getting some back office teams to respond to requests for information. Frequently asked questions often simply refer Frontline staff to other individuals in the Back Office. This exacerbates the situation and leads to a frustrating experience for staff and the customer.

Some back office staff are not forthcoming with information and can be too technical when they speak to Frontline staff which proves difficult to understand at times and can lead to misinterpretation. The back office staff often see sharing their information as losing control and therefore become resistant to sharing knowledge and information.

Front line staff have expressed a desire to receive more background information relating to their front line processes so that they understand why they are doing things. They feel they would benefit from more training/ work shadowing which is an approach that works really well in Benefits and fosters good relationships between the front line staff and back office staff. This approach keeps front line staff up-to-date, and provides the Back Office with more understanding and confidence.

A pilot group was formed to champion knowledge and information in the authority. However, this was put on hold with the development of the Contact Centre. Staff appraisals have also not taken place for customer services staff this year for the same reasons.

There is little consistency when it comes to when a member of staff needs to ask for help or refer an enquiry. Some staff will do all they can to fulfil the enquiry whereas others may refer to the back office straight away. In some cases staff will exceed what is required of them. Supervisors are aware and steps are in place to manage

the situation. The Council will need to develop consistent standards and processes for the contact centre and ensure that everyone in the front and back offices understands them.

Communicating effectively with people with additional needs is an area that needs to be developed with regards to managing knowledge and information. Staff need to understand how to communicate effectively with people with additional needs and have the information available in a suitable format appropriate for them and our customers. The implementation of a language line is underway and a Disability Access Officer is in post who consults regularly with a Disabilities Access Group.

There is more the Council could do to find out what is important to its customers and the information customers want.

Frontline Management

There is a significant amount of management information and data available yet a perception that qualitative data is limited. There is a desire to demonstrate a more proactive approach to using management information in terms of finding out what customers want (types of service and access to information), what more the Contact Centre can do for the back offices and level of performance of customer services required. Considerable thought is being given by the Customer Services Manager and plans are being put in place to improve the situation. A more joined up approach with the back office and strategic management is planned so as to ensure that customer services are delivering excellent services for the customers and contributing to corporate priorities.

Strategic Management

An Information Officer has been appointed who will need to engage herself with our knowledge and information management needs. The Council could be doing more to integrate knowledge and information management across the organisation and with business processes e.g. business planning and performance management. The Council will need to know more about the potential and actual contribution the Contact Centre will make to corporate priorities and assess how cost effective decisions are e.g. new approach to service delivery.

The Council needs to do more to know what will best serve its customers, what customer behaviour patterns are and what the political imperatives are around customer services.

Back Office

In most cases the back offices work independently from customer services. Back offices are concerned to set fulfilment levels that are too high and need to know

more about the capabilities of the Contact Centre and the added value it could give if they completed more enquiries and provided additional services.

Back offices could do more to find out if they are providing the right level of support to the Frontline and when they need to provide more support. There are no formal or consistent processes for updating and sharing information and assessing whether the right information is being provided.

This section will be updated when information is available following the completion of Knowledge and Information Audit by the Corporate Information Officer.

APPENDIX E – FUTURE KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Frontline

Front line staff need to know what to do when an enquiry comes in. This will include knowing the services the Council provides, when and who to contact if they need help or it is not a service the Council provides and how far they can resolve an enquiry before referring to specialist support. It will be important for them to understand the levels of their authority in order to make judgements concerning actions.

Front line staff also need to know how to operate the systems and what systems to use to access knowledge and information. All information and knowledge contained in the system needs to be up to date and accurate as it will be used to resolve a range of enquires e.g. benefit claims timescales, what to do when applying for a specific licence, council tax payment details, progress of planning applications.

Some customers may have additional needs i.e. language, sensory, learning, dementia and staff must know how to communicate effectively. Training needs will be addressed through the performance management system.

It is not only customers that will require information, back office teams will also be interested in the performance of the Contact Centre business and will want regular information on performance, progress and information needs for the Contact Centre

Frontline Service Management

The Customer Services Manager will require detailed management information on waiting times, response times, cost and staff information in order to manage the service effectively.

Looking forward and in response to the desire to be more proactive in designing services, the CSM will also require information on the profile of customers, what types of information customers want and how they like to access the information. It will be helpful to know what is important to customers in terms of service quality, their priorities, likes and dislikes so that we can develop the service quality dimensions that we will measure the service against. Once the Council has developed these dimensions the quality of our customer services will be measured by assessing how satisfied customers are for each customer segment. This will help to inform the Council on how our customers would like to see services improve.

In order to manage the Contact Centre effectively, along with the management information mentioned above it will be essential to be made aware as soon as

possible when there are changes/actions in specialist services that will impact on the demand for customer services.

Strategic Management

Strategic management will be interested to know the potential and actual contribution the Contact Centre will make to corporate priorities and how they are performing. This will include information on the cost effectiveness of the contact Centre and how satisfied our customers are including what more could be done to improve customer services. If the Council is to decide what will best serve its customers the Council will need information on their behaviour patterns along with similar information to that required by our back offices.

E government and the outcomes of IEG are important to Carlisle City Council particularly at this time and the Council will need to assess how effective it is “Hitting the streets” and if the improved services are making access easier and more efficient for its customers.

The Council must remember members also have a part to play in deciding what will best serve customers and we will need to assess the political imperatives around customer service and address what our members want and want to know.

Back Office

Back office teams will want to know how well the Contact Centre is delivering its services. Regular reviews of the levels of authority will be undertaken and so it is essential the back office keep a check on the levels and quality of service being provided by the Frontline.

Part of the review of service levels will be the assessment of the capabilities of the Contact Centre. The back office will need to consider what more the Contact Centre can deliver for the back offices and how they can provide support with consultation exercises.

On a regular basis, the back office will need to audit the knowledge and information being provided to the Contact Centre and ensure that it is up to date and accurate. The back offices will need access to the knowledge and information and the systems being used by the front line staff. It would also be helpful for the back office if the Contact Centre informs the back office teams about the frequently asked questions and what is successful and not so successful. This will help to determine customers’ knowledge and information needs.

APPENDIX F - SUPPORTING KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION STRUCTURE

In order to successfully implement this Knowledge and Information Management Strategy, the Council will put in place a robust and constructive structure. This structure will incorporate the necessary roles and responsibilities, and a performance management structure with realistic, achievable Critical Success Factors. These are outlined below:

Roles and Responsibilities

The Council will set up a strategic forum such as the Programme Board/ CMT to oversee and take Customer Services forward in the Council. This group will include the Executive Director, Head of Customer and Information Services, Head of Performance Management, Customer Services Manager, Programme Manager and relevant Heads of Service. This group will meet a minimum of every two months.

This group will be supported by:

- *the Corporate Information Officer* will lead the implementation of the Knowledge and Information Management Strategy and be responsible for all statutory requirements (Data Protection, Information Security, Freedom of Information). The Corporate Information Officer will meet on a monthly basis with the Customer Services Manager and Service Knowledge Base Officers and will report through to the Customer Services Programme Board on the progress of the implementation of the K&IMS.
- *Contact Centre Liaison Officer* will be identified in the Contact Centre to meet on a regular basis with each Service Base Knowledge Officer to review the accuracy and relevance of information and knowledge and various types of traffic flow and discuss any issues arising including needs for additional information.
- Service Knowledge Base Officers will be nominated in each service to be responsible for updating and maintaining knowledge and information for each Business Unit. These officers will also respond to any requests on knowledge, information or FAQs from the Contact Centre and will meet on a regular basis with the Contact Centre Liaison Officers. The Council will nominate individuals from each service to take on these roles as part of their existing jobs.
- *the Customer Services Manager* will meet with each Business Unit Manager on a regular basis to review performance and any issues arising. They will review service levels and explore any further services that could be delivered by the Contact Centre.

- *the Head of Customer and Information Service* will take forward the development of the Intranet and Knowledge base.

Critical Success Factors

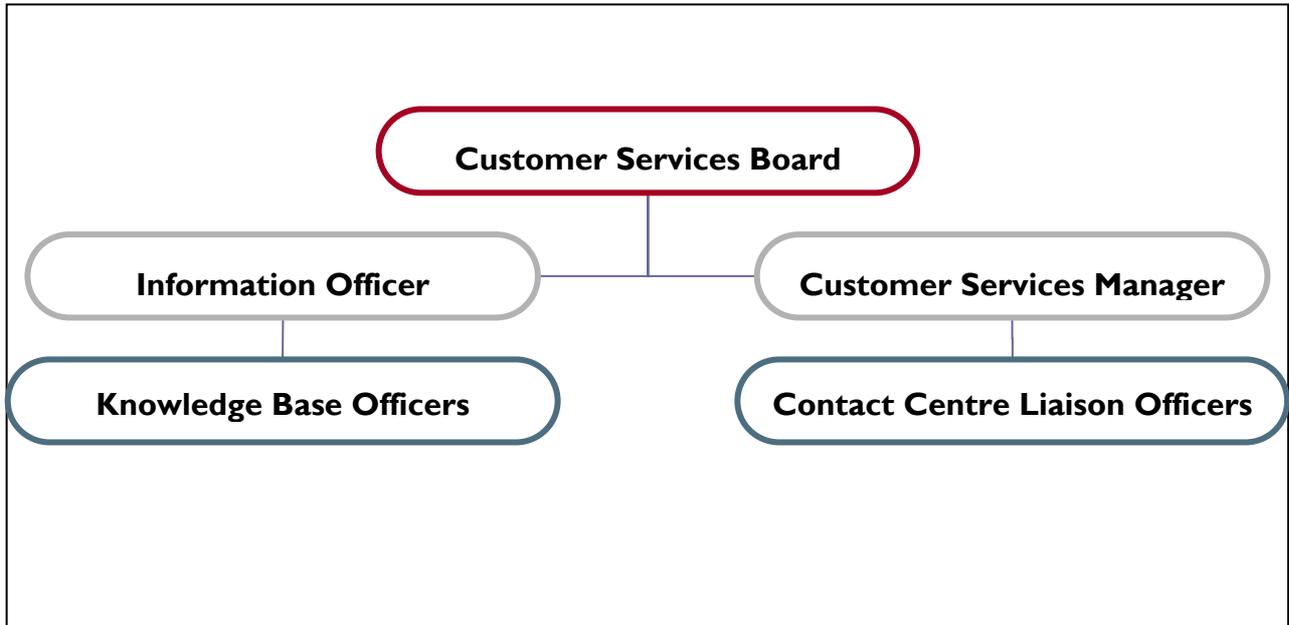
At the second workshop on the 7th May with managers the group explored the following management information for the Contact Centre which will help to assess the outcomes. The Council will now need to determine its critical success factors for measuring the success of the Knowledge and Information Management Strategy:

- % of “one and done”
- customer satisfaction (was the content right, good experience – good customer service features. Needed for each access channel)
- level of repeat enquiries
- response/waiting times (operational Frontline management) (corporately address any problems)
- savings in staff time in back office
- number of opportunities utilised
- %/ numbers of types of transactions and nature of channels (e.g. enquiries from rural areas)
- costs at an individual transaction level

Our Statutory Obligations (to be completed by Corporate Information Officer)

- Data Protection
- Information security
- Freedom of Information

Knowledge Management Structure



APPENDIX G - RISKS AND ISSUES

The Council will encounter various risks and issues if it does not implement the Knowledge and Information Strategy. Some of these may include:

Risks

- incorrect and out of date information
- legal action following giving out wrong information
- data protection – contravention, inability to not be able to deliver what we want
- customer dissatisfaction
- increased costs of the Contact Centre and Customer Services
- overloading our customers and staff
- information will not be immediately accessible, relevant or accurate
- poor integration between the Contact Centre and existing service teams
- dependence on individuals (e.g. “Jim and Barry” syndrome)

Issues

- what happens if the information system goes down?
- frontline staff do not have sufficient training to use the information correctly
- people reluctant to give up traditional knowledge and not making the effort to communicate what they need to (knowledge is power)
- independence of Business Units
- risk of not managing poor performance
- development of a blame culture where the Contact Centre takes the blame
- how to address things when it goes wrong – How can the Council make it work?