

Report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.6

Meeting Date: 13th February 2014
Portfolio: Communities & Housing
Key Decision: N/A
Within Policy and
Budget Framework N/A
Public / Private Public

Title: Customer Access Strategy
Report of: The Chief Executive
Report Number: CE10/14

Purpose / Summary:

The purpose of this report is to update the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the Customer Access Strategy (Appendix A) following on from the Task & Finish Group comments (Appendix B) in August 2013.

The Customer Access Strategy was produced in early 2013. In February 2013 the Senior Management Team endorsed the recommendations to turn the Strategy into an Action Plan with timescales and responsible officers.

Throughout financial year 2013/14, the aims and objectives of the action plan and thus the strategy, have been achieved.

The Customer Access Strategy has allowed Carlisle City Council to realise its potential in regard to customers accessing services and ensuring this experience is customer centric, efficient, effective and sustainable.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel endorse the proposals within this report of introducing a new strategy. This will combine the use of new and emerging digital service delivery to deliver efficiencies as well as continue to meet ever changing customer expectations.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Carlisle City Council has, since 2004, continued to grow and develop in the area of Customer Contact. The enhancements and improvements have included:

- Customer Service Advisors delivering more services at a single first point of contact.
- The delivery of partner services by Carlisle City Council staff.
- The ongoing use of customer feedback to inform service delivery.
- The introduction and promotion of self serve access points, including in community venues to reduce the digital divide.
- The use of technology to support and develop customer access and service delivery.
- The review and evaluation of collaboration opportunities.
- The development of a shared vision with partners for excellent customer access and seamless service delivery.

Customer expectations constantly need to be reviewed to ensure that Carlisle City Council recognise the way customers expect services to be delivered. Also, in times of austerity and reduced budgets, Carlisle City Council needs to deliver services in an efficient and cost effective manner.

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 It is proposed that a new Customer Access Strategy be produced which will bring together several key initiatives currently being undertaken within Carlisle City Council. The Strategy will harness together these initiatives and projects to ensure customer needs are met and efficiencies made.

3. CONSULTATION

3.1 A new Customer Access Strategy will be agreed by the Senior Management Team.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

4.1 The report contributes to the vision within the Carlisle plan priorities:
“To promote Carlisle as a prosperous City, one in which we can all be proud”

Contact Officer: Jillian Gillespie

Ext: 7461

Appendices Appendix A - Customer Access Strategy
attached to report: Appendix B - Task & Finish Group comments

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's -

Community Engagement –

Economic Development –

Governance –

Local Environment –

Resources -

Customer Access Strategy

Vision - To promote Carlisle as a prosperous City, one in which we can all be proud.

Objectives
<p>1. The customer experience will be of the highest possible standard</p> <p>Using customer information to shape service delivery around our customers needs so that they are delivered responsibly, accurately and cost effectively (All residents of Carlisle can confidently and easily access all the council's services they need. This should be in a timely and appropriate manner, irrespective of where they live, their skills knowledge and ability)</p>
<p>2. Customer access will be supported by the most appropriate use of new technologies</p> <p>Ensuring that we are an efficient and effective Council. One that continually reviews its processes and technological requirements to deliver cost efficient quality services in a timely manner that are appropriate to customers.</p>
<p>3. Achieve effective and appropriate collaboration with partners</p> <p>Proactively seeking out opportunities to work collaboratively with our partners to continually improve access to information and services provided to our customers.</p>
<p>4. Achieve channel shift across the whole of the customer base</p> <p>Encouraging self service where this is appropriate, for those who are able to contact the Council in this way, and publishing our achievements.</p>
<p>5. Learning, development and training</p> <p>Providing empowered, well-trained, professional and knowledgeable staff to support the delivery of services and assist customers to be confident and competent users of ICT based access.</p>

1. The customer experience will be of the highest possible standard

Action	Requiring	Timeline
Agree and introduce clear service standards across all aspects of customer contact.	Ensure that services are focussed fully around the needs of the customer by : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of face to face, telephony and web performance standards and monitoring mechanisms (such as mystery shoppers etc) across all access channels within all services. • Review use of customer insight to give us an accurate understanding of the customer profile (i.e. focus groups, feedback cards, CRM, complaints, compliments and comments). 	April 2013
Introduce new customer contact performance monitoring standards	Report quarterly to Community Engagement DMT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service level agreements for delivery of service requests, e.g. new bin, fly tipping removed, abandoned vehicle removed. 	April 2013
Re-engineer processes, in order to improve first point of contact resolution and improve right first time resolution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-design services and re-engineer processes and procedures via Lean Systems thinking methodology. • Introduce Rapid Improvement Events 	Jan 2012 onwards
All customer service requests, requests for information and advice to be co-ordinated through the customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers and Members should take details from customers and then direct the details through the customer contact centre. 	May 2012 onwards

contact centre and recorded on CRM in the first instance.		
Introduce systematic use of CRM intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed into covalent for a holistic view of customer needs. 	Jan 2012 onwards

2. Customer access will be supported by the most appropriate use of new technologies

Action	Requiring	Timeline
<p>Use technology to support and enhance customer access and service delivery.</p> <p>Set up an Automating Services Project Board to support new ways of working/service delivery using new and emerging technology.</p>	<p>Cross service/departmental work package</p> <p>Consider opportunities, and challenges associated with the greater use of the current and anticipated new technologies/social media to communicate and engage with customers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise and introduce mobile App technology for services, e.g. Housing App, Carlisle People App. • Undertake primary and secondary research, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identifying and evaluating good practice ○ focus groups, ○ market testing, 	2012/13

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ officer work groups ○ Member workshops ○ Young People's workshops 	
Devise, agree and implement new working practices across all customer contact locations, including Community venues.	Resourced implementation action plan in line with Transformation programme.	April 2013

3. Achieve effective and appropriate collaboration with partners		
Action	Requiring	Timeline
Review and evaluate all collaboration opportunities	<p>Working group with Customer Contact service to be a major part of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify areas of similarity/dissimilarity and potential barriers to implementation with partners • Evaluate greater customer access collaboration with (for example) CDRP, Police, DWP, Public Health Partners, Voluntary Sector, Riverside, YMCA, Salvation Army. • Further asset/accommodation sharing with partners, e.g. Post Office Counters, Job Centre Plus. • Examine collaborative opportunities to minimise the potential effects of the Welfare Reform Bill. 	Nov 2012 onwards

<p>Develop a shared vision with partners for excellent customer access in Carlisle and seamless customer service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish combined customer forums and integrate consultation activity. Share feedback and research. • Agree common signage across access channels supporting customers with learning, language or literacy difficulties or sensory loss to access services. • Share customer issues with all stakeholders to enable total resolution for customers in a cost effective way. Utilising customer information in accordance with the data protection act to overcome mutual issues which involve stakeholders. 	<p>March 2013</p>
<p>Rationalise and improve co-location of services with other partners.</p>	<p>Multi Agency Framework Model Approach.</p>	<p>Developed December 2012</p>

<p>4. Achieve channel shift across the whole of the customer base</p>		
<p>Action</p>	<p>Requiring</p>	<p>Timeline</p>
<p>An enhanced website facility ensuring consistency of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insight from customer groups (Youth Zone, Age UK, Focus 	<p>April 2013</p>

terminology and up to date service information.	Groups) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice from websites 	onwards
Reduce the digital divide by extending electronic access to services through community centres, village halls, leisure centres, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Community Centre projects including community web development. 	April 2013
Promote and market new ways of accessing services to help customers to become confident in accessing services in new ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of customers in the design and review, management and delivery of services, and the development of access channels and local customer facilities. • Use of Triage Reception roles to promote online facilities to customers • Use feedback as part of service design, development and delivery • Developing, embedding and encouraging self serve via an enhanced website and mobile Apps. 	April 2013

5. Learning, Development and Training

Action	Requiring	Timeline
Put customer access at the heart of all aspects of Council service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce customer service training as part of induction process. • Develop customer service training package to be incorporated into training, appraisals etc. • Build a customer centric authority with a focus on putting the customer first. 	April 2013
Deliver services through a committed, well trained and motivated workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embedded through all frontline services. 	Ongoing
Implement a comprehensive change management process to support staff through a period of rapid and substantial change particularly in the area of welfare reform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentoring process to cascade throughout authority. 	Jan 2013 onwards
Incorporate a “train the trainer” approach to cascade Lean Systems Thinking methodology through the authority to promote customer centric service improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train the trainer training through Lean programme. • Rapid Improvement Events identified. 	Developed Jan 2012 onwards
Improve internal communications and increase the capacity for staff to help shape the improvement of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge & Change Group • Staff briefings 	March 2013

services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information cascade back and forward via team meetings, DMT, etc, management briefings etc. 	
Ensure that performance management information, key indicators and monitoring systems are fed into covalent to measure our progress toward achieving excellence in customer access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected for quality and quantity measurement. • Goals to ensure constant improvement in delivery of services. • In line with ongoing service reviews and customer expectations. 	April 2013
Ensure Equality and Diversity training for all staff to deliver an appropriately sensitive service to a diverse community with diverse requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to reach groups • Community Resource Centre, Hostels • Age UK, Youth Zone, CLL, Tullie House, Community Venues • Disability groups • In collaboration with partners – Police, Voluntary Sector, Riverside, YMCA, Salvation Army, County Council 	2012/13

Customer Access Strategy – Task & Finish Group

Briefing Note for Panel 22nd August 2012

1. Cllrs Prest, Stevenson and Vasey were appointed by the Panel on 11th July to the Task Group to look at the Customer Access Strategy.
2. The Task Group held a meeting on 2nd August 2013 with the Customer Services Manager, Jill Gillespie and the Director of Community Engagement, Keith Gerrard. Prior to the meeting the Customer Access Strategy document was circulated to Task Group members. (copy attached)
3. The Customer Services Manager explained to the Task Group that the Strategy had been developed in order to focus on customers and their needs and tied in with the Carlisle Plan.
4. The Customer Contact Centre was developing into a One Stop Shop for services in the district. Currently Cumbria County Council (Adult Social Care), Cumbria Constabulary, Passport Service and the CAB had presence in the centre. Closer links were also being developed with Carlisle Law Centre.
5. The foyer in the Civic Centre was currently undergoing an overhaul. Triage Receptionists are being introduced in order to filter and signpost customers. This will ensure that the most in need will receive support and advice required. There is evidence that previously people have left the Civic Centre without seeing an Adviser.
6. Self service kiosks are to be placed in the Contact Centre and customers will be encouraged to use the kiosks for straightforward tasks which will free up Advisers time for those with more complicated queries. It is hoped that eventually kiosks will be available in community settings, eg Community or Parish Centres.
7. More tasks can now be completed on-line and it is expected that over time less and less people will need to visit the Civic Centre as more routine enquiries will be undertaken in this way.
8. Members of the Task Group agreed that there was little that they could do to add value to the area. They commended the work and enthusiasm of the Customer Services Manager and her staff.
9. It was agreed that each of the Members would spend an hour in the Contact Centre to experience first hand the service and that the Task Group would reconvene in February 2014 to be updated in the implementation of the Action Plan.

Nicola Edwards

Overview and Scrutiny Officer