

# **BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**1 DECEMBER 2011**

## **NEW CUSTOMER CONTACT TEAM - JANUARY 2012**

Report from/Author: Richard Hicks, Assistant Director Customer First,  
Leisure, Culture, Democracy and Governance

### **Summary**

This Report sets out the progress made on the transition to the new Customer Contact model which will go live in January 2012. The Report outlines the processes that have been followed and the work undertaken thus far, and presents an opportunity for Members of the Committee to raise any issues, prior to the establishment of the new arrangements.

### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

1.1 The Better for Less programme and the strand of work to transform customer contact are part of the policy framework in the Council Plan 2011/12 as agreed by Council on 24 February 2011. The projected financial impact of the programme and the required capital investment were agreed as part of the budget on the same date. The Medium Term Financial Plan 2012/15 describes the contribution that the Better for Less programme is expected to make to help the Council bridge the forecast deficit in funding.

### **2. Background**

2.1 As Members will be aware, the Better for Less transformation programme is designed to improve the experience of our customers and to deliver efficiency savings. The expectations of our customers continue to rise and there is a need to adopt a strategic approach to balancing the budget.

2.2 Following extensive staff engagement, a new model of Customer Contact has been developed. It builds on and extends existing good practice and ensures it is consistently applied. The first phase is due to go live in January 2012.

### **3. Advice and analysis**

- 3.1 The new Customer Contact model aims to ensure:
- Customers only have to tell their story once to the Council
  - Customers get their enquiries, including those on a range of topics, dealt with fully, without follow up contact being required, wherever possible
  - Customers can access services when they want to, through enhanced on-line and self service opportunities
  - Best and most flexible use of staff to ensure peaks and troughs of work across different services can be managed effectively.
- 3.2 The potential benefits from the proposed customer contact model are clear:
- One team, with economies and benefits of scale
  - Enhanced focus on customer service and specialist areas
  - Simpler to contact the Council
  - Enabling greater mobile working, meaning staff do not need to return to base to upload information.
- 3.3 In taking the project forward the Council is complying with the requirements of its Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) process. A DIA is undertaken to ensure that the project's implementation takes into account the needs of different groups of customers. This is done by reviewing the proposed process changes and what they might mean for customers, to identify and put in place appropriate mitigation measures. Work has been undertaken with the teams involved in Release 1 to ensure good practice is retained and that the new processes do not inadvertently disadvantage our customers.
- 3.4 Further focus groups will be held for:
- Black and Minority Ethnic Groups
  - Disabled Groups
  - Younger and older residents
- to ensure further feedback is gained on the proposals.
- 3.5 To ensure Members are engaged with the programme and have an opportunity to shape the model, an informal Member User Group involving Members across the Political Groups has been established to review progress and bring forward suggestions. This Group has met on two occasions and will meet on a quarterly basis following go-live in January.
- 3.6 Significant changes to ICT systems are required to support teams working in new ways. Considerable effort and focus has been given to implementing a new Customer Relationship Management system with the associated integration into back-office systems, mobile working solutions and improved electronic document management systems. A short demonstration of the new system will be presented to Members at Committee.

### **4. Risk Management**

- 4.1 Risk Management is an integral part of good governance and a Risk Log has been maintained throughout the Better for Less programme.

#### 4.2 The key risks are as follows:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Action to avoid or mitigate</b>
ICT	Procurement of Customer Relationship Management system, integration with back office, testing and training for staff not delivered to programme	Procured new CRM to time, integrations being carried out to schedule, additional Testing capacity secured and training scheduled to commence in December
Go-live	New team and systems unable to cope with demand on day 1	A Readiness for Go-Live procedure has been established to ensure the operation only commences once the requisite personnel and resources are in place
Continuation of service delivery	Day to day service delivery is impacted by the transition to the new arrangements	Scheduled activity (interviews, training, systems configuration) has been widely communicated to minimise adverse impacts. Activity is undertaken in conjunction with existing service teams

### 5. Consultation

- 5.1 The models and associated staffing changes have been subject to formal consultation with those staff potentially affected within phase 1 services. The staff consultation ran from 4 July to 30 September, with staff having the opportunity to submit counter proposals in accordance with the Council's agreed organisational change procedures.

### 6. Financial and legal implications

- 6.1 Over the life of the Better for Less programme it is anticipated there will be savings in excess of £5m.
- 6.2 Release 1 of the programme (Customer Contact and Administration) is estimated to deliver approximately £2m in savings.

### 7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the arrangements for the new Customer Contact operation going live in January 2012 and to provide feedback on the issues set out in this report.

#### Lead officer contact

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#### Background papers

Reports on Better for Less Programme- Establishment of new models for Customer Contact and Administration to Cabinet 4 October and Council on 20 October.



**Services in each phase**

**Phase 1: April – December 2011**

*Children and Adults*

- Adults Integrated Health and Social Care Teams
- Business Support (within Children and Adults)
- Learning Disability, Integrated Health and Social Care Teams
- Mental Health
- Older People Services (Linked Service Centres and Day Services)
- Physical Disability
- Social Care Commissioning and Client Financial Services

*Regeneration, Community and Culture*

- Development Management
- Festivals, Arts, Theatres and Events

*Business Support*

- Customer First
- Housing Solutions
- Medway Revenue and Benefits
- Strategic Housing

**Phase 2: January – September 2012**

*Children and Adults*

- Children and Adults Management Team\*
- Early Years Services
- Integrated Youth Services
- Research and Information\*
- Systems and Support\*

*Regeneration, Community and Culture*

- Greenspaces and Heritage
- Parking
- Integrated Transport
- Leisure Services
- RCC Corporate Management Team \*
- Tourism

### *Business Support*

- Accounting Services \*
- Adult and Community Learning
- Asset and Property services \*
- Bereavement and Registration
- BSD and RCC Finance Team \*
- Building and Design Services \*
- Business Support Management Team \*
- CEO and Support \*
- Children's and Adult's Finance Team \*
- Strategic Procurement \*
- Communications and Marketing \*
- Democratic Services \*
- Finance Support \*
- Health and Safety \*
- Housing Performance and Service Improvement \*
- Housing Revenue Account (Landlord, Estate, Sheltered and Repair Services)
- Legal Services \*
- Libraries
- Local Land Charges and Licensing
- Member and Mayoral Services \*
- Performance and Management Information \*
- Research and Review \*
- RMI Exchequer (creditors and debtors)
- Workforce Development \*

### **Phase 3: October 2012 – June 2013**

#### *Children and Adults*

- Children's Integrated Area Teams
- Psychology and Inclusion
- Public Health
- Specialist Services

#### *Regeneration, Community and Culture*

- Building Control Partnership
- Economic Development and Social Regeneration
- Highways Maintenance\*\*
- Planning Policy and Design
- Medway 2012 and Sports Development
- Safer Communities (including CCTV)\*\*
- Traffic, Road Safety and Capital Projects\*\*
- Waste Services (including Pest Control)\*\*

#### *Business Support*

- Children's Independent Safeguarding and Review Team (including MSCB)
- Electoral Services
- Internal Audit and Fraud
- RMI Exchequer (insurance)

#### **Phase 4: July 2013 – March 2014**

##### *Children and Adults*

- 14 – 19 Commissioning and Strategy
- School Improvement Team – inclusion and diversity
- School Meals
- School Organisation and Student Services
- Well-Being Services

##### *Regeneration, Community and Culture*

- Safer Communities (Regulatory Services and CSP)

##### *Business Support*

- Human Resources
- Human Resources (Schools)
- ICT

**\* Indicates implementation of shared administration only will take place for this service in this phase. This is because these services do not perform significant customer-facing activities and are unaffected by the customer contact changes.**

**\*\*Indicates services that will commence Phase 3 early (September 2012 – March 2013)**

