

CCF Scrutiny Board Contact Centre Working Group Briefing Paper

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Customer Access Programme** is part of the wider Business Transformation agenda and it will deliver a portfolio of projects and workstreams aimed at transforming the way in which the council delivers services and interfaces with customers, to ensure they receive excellent services which are efficient and effective and meet their needs.

The aim of the programme is to make a saving on frontline activity, through designing better processes and, enhance customer experience and exceed customer expectations by meeting most needs at the first point of contact. Although the programme is predominantly customer focused, it intends to deliver financial savings on the basis that customer-led transformation will generate considerable efficiencies.

The programme will introduce new methods of working, make the best use of people, maximise the use of technology and re-engineer business processes to provide greater use of more cost-effective customer access channels for enquiry handling and assessment. It will facilitate simple and convenient access to services, designed around the needs of customers and, provide the infrastructure to enable greater personalisation and choice around the services they consume. Duplication and administration will be reduced through the empowerment of officers to respond to customer needs at the first point of contact and increased sharing of information, including a single customer record.

BACKGROUND

During 2009/2010, Leeds City Council was one of thirteen local authorities who agreed to participate in the Local Partnerships' Delivering Efficient Capability and Transformational Solutions (DECATS) Programme. This programme was developed on behalf of the Local Government Association to help local authorities deliver a step change in efficiency and, the primary aim, was to enable participating local authorities to develop an individual case for change using a proven sector based diagnostic methodology.

The DECATS programme utilised a diagnostic toolkit which examined the council's organisational structure and processes across the traditional boundaries of service areas and, in doing so, provided a cross-cutting analysis of the council's efficiency and effectiveness across the customer journey of initial customer contact, assess and decide, and service delivery. It also assessed the suitability and success of both support processes in front-line operations, and in strategic and support services. The result was the identification of over 500 improvement opportunities which were filtered and brought together under common themes.

These improvement opportunities were then prioritised by Corporate Leadership Team, with a focus on those expected to deliver greatest efficiency savings and improvements.

A total of seven cross-cutting themes were identified, each of which is underpinned by a high level, outline business case (OBC). This OBC was approved by Cabinet in September, 2010, and the improvement opportunities included in the wider Business Transformation portfolio.

One of the seven cross-cutting themes established by the DECATS programme, related to customer access and assessment so, the improvement opportunities identified were brought together to create an integrated **Customer Access Programme**, as part of the wider Business Transformation agenda. This programme has been designed to provide a joined up approach to delivering projects which will improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and increase customer satisfaction.

Over the past few months work has been ongoing to develop a Customer Strategy 2011-2015, around improving customer access across the council. This work has involved the drafting of a document which has been discussed at Customer Strategy Board and is now in the final stages of development. This strategy establishes the vision, ethos and values which will form the foundation blocks of the council's customer relations operating model. It also includes a channel approach, a set of corporate customer service key performance standards and a set of fundamental principles, upon which, customer access and customer-focused change will be built.

Now that this work is almost complete, the focus has switched to scoping Phase 1 of the programme and producing a viable Business Case.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the Customer Access Programme as a whole are:

- ✦ to transform the way in which the council delivers services and interfaces with customers, to ensure that customers receive excellent services which are efficient and effective and meet their needs;
- ✦ to re-engineer processes around the needs of customers to improve the quality of service delivery and standardise ways of working in the front and back office;
- ✦ to encourage a shift to lower cost access channels and the migration of service contact management to the corporate infrastructure (Internet, Corporate Contact Centre, One Stop Centres);
- ✦ to develop all contact channels to enable greater resolution of service requests at first point of contact and maximise the ability to provide front-line services.

After further analysis of the customer access improvement opportunities, established as part of the DECATS programme, a number of service areas have been identified, where end to end transformation could reap considerable financial and customer service benefits, if the way the service is delivered was re-designed. In addition, research has identified several service request processes where re-engineering from the front end right through to the back office, supported by relevant technology changes, could deliver significant efficiency benefits as well as providing a more responsible and informed service to the public.

One of those service areas is the Health and Environmental Action Services (HEAS) and two of the processes are missed bins and bulky household waste removals, within the Environment and Neighbourhoods Directorate. In the first instance, it has been proposed that the Business Transformation team work with the services in these three areas, as part of Phase 1 of the Customer Access Programme. Preliminary discussions between senior officers have taken place and work has started on the detailed scoping of Phase 1 and the production of a viable Business Case.

Although the detailed scope has yet to be agreed and the Business Case approved, the prospective objectives of Phase 1 are:

- ✦ end to end transformation of Environment and Neighbourhoods, Health and Environmental Action Service (HEAS), where the potential improvement opportunities and both the financial and customer service benefits are the greatest, if the way the service is delivered and the enquiries handled, were to be transformed. This service transformation will involve business process re-engineering, improving enquiry handling by Customer Services, the implementation of new technology and the introduction of self service. This project will be a proof of concept, to trial the service re-design methodology, develop a template for a standardised customer relations operating model and provide a success story for the programme;
- ✦ re-engineering of the 'bulky household waste' service request process and the 'missed bins' customer contact transaction, from the front end right through to the back office. These are two of the highest volume and costliest contacts received by the council and, are currently inefficient, overly bureaucratic and complicated. This project will improve the availability of self service for customers, managers and staff and encourage channel shifting, through enhanced transactional functionality of the Leeds City Council website, making it more customer friendly, effective, improve service delivery and realise significant financial savings.

GOVERNANCE

A Customer Access Delivery Board has been formed to provide governance, sponsor the Business Case, ensure the programme and projects are being effectively managed and are delivering the required outcomes and benefits. The Board will monitor progress and prioritise the work of both the Customer Access Programme and the ICT Services, Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) Programme.

The board is chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning, Policy and Improvement), currently consists of the Chief ICT Officer, the Chief Business Transformation Officer, the Chief Customer Services Officer and, would also include Chief Officers from Environmental Services and Waste Management, if the programme Business Case is approved.