



**Report of Chief Officer, Sustainable Energy and Air Quality**

**Report to Director of Resources and Housing**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2021**

**Subject: Transition of Services from the Communities Directorate to the Resources Directorate**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary**

**1. Main issues**

- Over 200 staff are transitioning from Communities and Environment to Resources from 4 different teams:
  - Contact Centre
  - Digital Access Team
  - Business Support Team
  - Customer Relations
- The overall cost of the staff transitioning is £7,068,042 with savings of £546,557 to be delivered in 2021/2 via a number of routes, with a key focus on both:
  - reducing demand to the contact centre via service transformation;
  - delivering ways to reduce after call/ administration time.

**2. Best Council Plan Implications** (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- The proposals set out a new sustainable structure to support the delivery of our best council outcomes and our people ambitions as set out in our People Strategy.

**3. Resource Implications**

- a. At this stage the proposal is cost neutral with the exception of the reduction of one Dir45% and one Dir60% post. However, the changes will enable the required savings of £546k to be delivered within the services.

## **Recommendations**

The Director of Resources & Housing is requested to approve the following requests:

- a. To move the contact centre into BSC, focused on the operational management of the contact centre
- b. To delete Dir60% post (Head of Contact Centre)
- c. To create a new interim role Head of Transformation that will focus on the savings and transformation work programme.
- d. To separate the business support team according to its functions rather than move as a whole team as set out in Appendix B
- e. To delete Dir45% post (Development and Improvement Manager)
- f. To move the Customer Relations team to Chief Executive's Office
- g. To move the Digital Access Team within DIS with the exception of those roles that are related to the social media team, which should move to become part of the contact centre
- h. To move the Insite team within the Digital Access Team, reporting to the On Line Development Manager
- i. To note the need to develop ways to strengthen the links between the Communication Team and the Digital Access Team on an on-going basis
- j. To note the need to develop robust governance to enable prioritisation of the work of both the web team and the Customer Access Development team within DIS in line with the overall council's requirements and to provide greater transparency
- k. To note the need to agree a SLA between face to face and the resourcing and forecasting team, the P& R team as well as the training team to agree what services will continue to be provided and how.

### **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To set out the recommendations in terms of where staff should transition to achieve the best synergies and what actions need to happen to enable these changes to happen with minimum disruption to service.

### **2. Background information**

- 2.1 The contact centre currently manages 743,000 calls as well as 240,000 emails. The Head of Contact Centre (Dir60) manages both the contact centre itself as well as the Digital Access Team. This has led to some functions, that are potentially more operational, sitting within the Digital Access Team such as management of the out of hours team. The Contact Centre has two Operations Managers (P06) and they split their workload by service areas as shown below:

- Housing, Planning, Council Tax and Benefits, Local Welfare Support

- Adults Social Care, Children's Social Care, Registrars, Blue Badge, School Admissions, Election, Transactional Services (including waste, pest control and highways)

2.2 There are two deputy operations managers (P02), although one post is currently vacant. There are also 11 team leaders (S02) who on average manage 14 members of staff. There are circa 30 customer services officers at C1, equivalent of 26.95FTEs and circa 123 customer service officers at B3, equivalent of 106 FTE. There is also a Technical Development and Support Manager (P04) who focuses on IT and telephony within the contact centre.

2.3 The Business Support Team comprises of a range of quite disparate functions, ranging from training to user research and supports both the contact centre and face to face. The budget for the team is £1,274,210 and there are currently over 30 staff. There is an overarching Development and Improvement Manager at Dir45%. There are 6 P04 posts and below is a description of what each of their teams do:

- Training and development manager (1 post)

The training and development team consists of 2 P01 posts and 3 SO2 posts. The team fulfil a multitude of training needs for both the contact centre and face to face staff. They work closely with the Resourcing Manager to identify when existing staff need to be trained in additional services to enable effective resource management. They also complete induction training that incorporates customer service skills as well as the more general corporate induction. The team provide the support for the apprentices, which is very time consuming. Pre covid, the intention was to increase the number of cohorts that are recruited but this is currently on pause. The team also support staff engagement and help with organising events.

- Resourcing Manager (1 post)

The resourcing team consists of 14 staff, including 2 Performance Management Officers (S02), 2 Forecast Analysts (S02), a Workplace Analyst (SO2), 7 Workforce Planning Officers (C3) and a Data Management Officer (C3). They also employ 2 staff via BSC who specifically support recruitment.

The team undertake a wide range of operational functions for face to face and the contact centre. This includes recruitment and attendance management logging, making sure that leave is recorded properly across the services and that follow up meetings etc. are scheduled in. The team also manage resource planning for both face to face and the contact centre and scheduling as well as on day performance monitoring for the contact centre. In addition the team provide a data management function across both services.

- Customer Access Development Manager (4 posts)

Each CAD Manager focuses on a different area but fundamentally their role is looking at the end to end processes to improve the customer journey as well as improving efficiency. There are also 2 Customer Access Officers (SO2). Their work supports the channel shift objective and digitalisation. One of the CAD Manager's posts focuses on user research and the post is funded by both the Digital Access Team and the Business Support Team on a 50:50 basis. Another one of the CAD Managers also manages four performance and relationship officers (C3). These

officers focus on liaison with the different services to ensure that the day to day processes are kept up to date, maintaining the HOOT system that is used within the contact centre as an information database. They also manage the CSO feedback inbox and investigate issues that are raised, logging them so that the team leaders can understand any issues.

2.4 The customer relations team is headed up by a Customer Relations Manager (PO4) and consists of two Customer Relations Coordinators (SO1), three Customer Relations Officers (C3) and a Customers Relations Assistant (B3). The service covers three directorates: City Development, Communities and Environment and Resources and Housing. The other two directorates have their own complaints teams.

2.5 The work undertaken by the team includes logging, acknowledging and allocating complaints for investigation. Additional to this they support investigating officers in responding, manage follow on contact from customers, deal with difficult/persistent complainants and provide reporting information around complaint performance. More detail is provided in the table below.

<b>Number of:</b>	
Complaints received	5519 per year (based on 2019/20 data)
Calls received	35 per working day
Emails received	26 per working day
CF50As	50 per month
Member enquiries	430 per month
Compensation Claims	250 per year (based on 2020 data)
Ombudsman Cases	163 enquiries per year

The team already work closely with both the Information Governance team and Chief Executive's Office.

2.6 The Digital Access Team is responsible for making the council's online services simpler, clearer and faster. The team has a diverse skillset of dedicated staff who specialise in user research, content design, front end development, analysis and social media. Recently there has been a real focus on making the website compliant with accessibility regulations criteria.

2.7 The team is managed by an On-line Development Manager (PO6), with a team of just over 20 staff ranging from P04 to C1. The staffing budget for the digital access team is £913,626 but there is currently a funding gap of just over £239k.

2.8 Currently the Insite team operates as a separate team, sitting within BSC. There are 4 staff reporting to a P06 who manages a much wider range of functions.

### **3. Main issues**

3.1 Within the contact centre a number of key opportunities have been identified that will be prioritised in 2021/22 to support the financial savings plans that have already been approved:

- Reducing contact from services that already have a good quality of online offer, especially the more transactional services;
- Reducing the time spent on emails by trying to increase the structure of the emails that are received;
- Improving the online offer for key council tax transactions such as change of address;
- Implementing the customer portal of the Civica CX housing system;
- Continued improvement of the on-line offer for Registrars via Stopford;
- Improving productivity through:
  - Improved systems interface;
  - Implementation of a proactive rewards and recognition system;
  - Reviewing staff working patterns versus demand profiles.

- 3.2 Due to the overall proposed changes that will result from the transition of moving staff from communities to resources, the Head of Contact Centre post will no longer have the same range of roles and responsibilities, primarily as the Digital Access Team will not move with the contact centre.
- 3.3 To deliver the required changes there needs to be a real focus on the transformation of services but there also needs to be an in-depth review of the operational performance of the contact centre. To achieve these two very broad outcomes, it is considered that it will be more effective to split the responsibilities of the role.
- 3.4 It is recommended that the operational management of the contact centre will sit within the Business Support Centre under the Head of Business Support Centre and that a new interim Head of Transformation (Dir 60) role is created until November 2021 that will support the delivery of the transformation required to meet the financial goals. The current Head of Contact Centre will be flexibly deployed into the interim Head of Transformation role. The newly created interim post will report to the Chief Officer, Sustainable Energy and Air Quality as she is taking an interim programme role to oversee the transformation and savings plans for 2021/22. In November 2021 the interim post will be deleted when the postholder retires.
- 3.5 At Appendix B the new structure charts can be found that show where the different teams are proposed to be placed.
- 3.6 In terms of the business support team, if this team were to transition into one area, there is no obvious place that could adequately support all of its functions. For example DIS may be well placed to support the Customer Access Managers but would not be able to effectively support the more operationally focused roles of the training and development or resourcing and forecasting teams. Moving the whole team within the contact centre would lose the synergies that could be achieved by closer working between the Customer Access Development Managers and DIS. Moving as one team will also make it more difficult to achieve any savings at a management level as an overarching manager of the team would still be required.
- 3.7 The option that provides the smoothest transition would be to place different functions within different parts of Resources.
- 3.8 At a high level this would allow better synergies to be developed as each sub team would be placed where they best fit and where the most benefit can be achieved. It

would also allow for staffing savings to be achieved as management of each sub team would be amalgamated into existing team structures.

- Resourcing and Forecasting
  - As 70% of their role is focused on the contact centre, this team should be located within BSC, alongside the contact centre. Going forward this team have a unique skillset that has the potential to support other services beyond customer access and this is something that should be explored once the initial transition is successfully embedded.
- Customer Access Development
  - The majority of this service would be best located within DIS due to the transformational nature of their role and the ability to support the multiple change projects that will be required, helping to provide insight into both the customer's and staff needs as well as having detailed understanding of the processes being reviewed. However, one of the P04 posts manages the P&R team which has a more operational focus and acts as the liaison point between the contact centre and face to face and the wide range of customer services that they support. The P04 also supports projects from a contact centre perspective. It is recommended that this post sits alongside the contact centre, under the transformation side.
- Training and Development

It is proposed that the training and development team will sit under the transformation side of the Contact Centre as training will be at the core of the changes that are introduced over the next few years. When a more steady state has been reached there may be an opportunity to explore alternatives but this should be considered as a second stage of transition as opposed to part of this initial transition.

3.9 There are two key locations that the Customer Relations team could logically move to due to where their work currently interfaces with: Information Governance or Chief Executive's Office

3.10 The information governance team is undergoing its own review and is currently struggling to cope with the volumes of requests received. The remit of the IG team is also very wide and closely linked to DIS due to the interface on data protection. Due to the current state of flux within the team with staff changes, it doesn't seem a sensible time to broaden their remit – however it will be important that the current monthly meetings between the two teams continue. Ways to improve the way the two teams work together should be considered as phase 2 of transition.

3.11 Chief Executive's Office already deal with some of the more complex complaints that get escalated directly to the Chief Executive and already work closely with the Customer Relations team. It would therefore seem logical to strengthen this relationship and place the team within the Chief Executive's office. However, each of the three directorates that they support will need to ensure that they have nominated senior points of contact to support the more complex complaints as the current post for the senior manager of the team is being retained by Communities and Environment and there is not capacity within the current leadership team to dedicate substantial levels of time in resolving the more complex complaints.

- 3.12 Within the digital access team there are a range of functions that are managed, including the management of the general enquiries email inbox and the response to transactional social media enquiries. Going forward it is proposed that the staff who directly respond to customer queries and their team leaders/ managers are located with the contact centre rather than alongside the Digital Access Team.
- 3.13 The remainder of the Digital Access Team will then become part of DIS. However, it is critical that the link to the communications team is strengthened. There are some members of the team who focus on content design would benefit from a more formal link to communications and ways to establish this need to be developed as part of the transition process.
- 3.14 It is also proposed that the Insite team are managed by the Online development manager to allow a more cohesive web strategy to be developed. In order to enable this, the Digital Access Team will also have to support the running of the Electronic Data Records Management Systems as this is part of the Insite team's current responsibilities.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 Consultation with Trade Union colleagues commenced on 19<sup>th</sup> February and concluded on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.
- 4.1.2 Engagement sessions with staff have also taken place. Questions from staff have been responded to in these sessions and / or included in an FAQs document that has been shared across the Contact Centre. Feedback from these sessions has been discussed during the Trade Union consultation meetings.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 Due regard has been given to equality and an equality screening assessment has been carried out, which is appended to the report.

### **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 The proposals set out a new sustainable structure to support the delivery of our best council outcomes and our people ambitions as set out in our People Strategy.

#### Climate Emergency

- 4.3.2 The transition of staff between directorate will have neither a positive or negative impact on the climate emergency. However, much of the transformational work that takes place will help to make contact more efficient and although focused on the contact centre will inevitably also support customers to choose the digital option rather than travelling to visit face to face, helping to reduce the need for journeys.

### **4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money**

- 4.4.1 At this stage the proposal is cost neutral with the exception of the reduction of one Dir45% post and one Dir60% post in November. However, the changes will enable the required savings of £546k to be delivered within the services.

## **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

- 4.5.1 There are no legal implications associated with the proposals set out in this report and the report is not subject to call-in

## **4.6 Risk management**

- 4.6.1 It is essential that individual enquiries are dealt with consistently through every channel and therefore the functions that serve both the contact centre and the face to face services will all play a key role in helping to maintain that consistency and identifying issues, supported by a SLA to set the framework for the continued joint working.
- 4.6.2 To ensure a consistent brand for the council, the links between the digital access team and the communications team need to continue to be developed.

## **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 There will be a requirement to work closely with staff to successfully deliver the changes proposed and to ensure that the benefits of closer working are achieved.
- 5.2 The development of effective governance and SLAs will support a successful handover.
- 5.3 The contact centre needs to make some significant changes quickly to deliver the savings required and the splitting of roles between operation and transformation will enable the required focus on both areas moving forward. This change programme will also be supported by the increase in resource in DIS to focus on the channel shift.

## **6. Recommendations**

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## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1 Appendix 1 Head of Transformation Job Description
- 7.2 Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment Screening Document