CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
C O U N C I L

Confident Capable Council Scrutiny Panel
28 June 2016

Report title	Future Customer – Improving Customer Service
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Andrew Johnson, Resources
Accountable director	Mark Taylor, Corporate Services
Originating service	Customer Service
Accountable employee(s)	Sue Handy Head of Customer Service Tel 01902 553053 Email sue.handy@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	C3 Scrutiny Panel

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Panel is recommended to:

1. Note progress against delivery of the Customer Service Transformation Programme.
2. Note progress against delivery of the Customer Service Strategy Action Plan

1.0   Purpose

1.1   The purpose of this report is to update Confident Capable Council Scrutiny Panel on progress against delivery of both the Customer Service Transformation Programme and the Customer Service Strategy Action plan.

2.0   Background

Customer Service Transformation Programme

2.1   Delivery of the Customer Service Transformation Programme (CSTP) began in November 2014, the primary focus of the programme is the creation of a single front office for the council, which handles all customer enquiries. In order to facilitate this it is necessary to transfer as much customer facing activity as possible into Customer Service. The functions transferring into the contact centre are tier 1 and 2 activities which are deemed to be high volume and low complexity.

2.2   In order to support delivery of the programme a new Customer Engagement Platform has been procured and implemented alongside delivery of the CSTP. The new CEP will expedite channel shift in line with our digital by design ethos, allow for the production of improved performance information to support evidence based change within the organisation and enable a single view of the customer. Where possible, the new CEP will replace small bespoke IT solutions within service areas which will reduce licence and support costs for the authority.

2.3   Following a diagnostic check across the council by an external partner, a migration plan or 'Wave Plan' for services to migrate into the customer service was produced and approved by Cabinet in April 2014. The criteria for services being on the "wave plan" were identification of high levels of low complexity customer contact being received by that specific service area. Each service area identified on the plan undergoes a 4 week baselining exercise which is carried out by the transformation team within Customer Services.

2.4   The baselining process involves the transformation team sitting within service areas and in consultation with the teams they monitor all activity undertaken by employees. A draft recommendation or baseline report is then produced which details what is deemed to be tier 1 and 2 activity and therefore what is 'in scope' for transfer into Customer Services. The report also details what associated resource is required to transfer in order to handle this volume of customer contact. The draft baseline report is reviewed by Operational Managers, Head of Service and Assistant Director of the particular service area; during review meetings the transformation teams understanding of the service is checked and provision of associated resources are discussed and negotiated. Baseline reports are amended where appropriate and the report is submitted to the monthly Customer Service Transformation board for consideration and endorsement.

2.5   Where possible migrating functions are lifted and shifted into Customer Services with processes continuing to be delivered as they have been in the short term. Once the migrated team has settled within Customer Services the transformation team, together

with the newly migrated employees carry out Business Process Reengineering (BPR) of the processes and systems used. Processes are then streamlined, IT systems improved and where appropriate digital access channels for customers are opened up. Customer Service works closely with the rescinding department to ensure that any change to service delivery is acceptable to them and performance data provided is clear and presented in a format and to a timescale that is agreeable to all parties. This bespoke agreement is built into an SLA which is reviewed with the service area on a monthly basis.

2.6   To provide on-going resilience in service delivery a number of Customer Service employees are trained to carry out functions for newly migrated services. Training packages are developed and delivered in consultation with employees and senior managers from the rescinding service. Senior managers of the rescinding service often support and participate in delivery of this training and where appropriate carry out a floor walking function to support employees taking migrated calls on the first day of operation.

2.7   Each of the services migrated into Customer Services is subject to a risk assessment and equalities analysis which is undertaken in conjunction with the rescinding service area. The CSTP is a corporate project; progress on delivery of the programme is reported to the Corporate Programme Office through Verto.

Customer Service Strategy

2.8   The current Customer Services Strategy was approved for delivery by Cabinet on 22 July 2015. The strategy sets out the five principals of customer service that we are committed to delivering as an organisation.

   I.   Customer needs -: We will put the user at the heart of service design and delivery to ensure that we provide responsive, joined-up services that are inclusive and customer focussed.

   II.   Access to council services -: We will provide easily accessible services and information promptly and in a way that reflects our customers' choices, needs, and circumstances. This will include as a priority the development and implementation of a Channel Management System for the council's website to facilitate channel shift when this is desired by our customers.

   III.   First time resolution -: We will reduce the need for customers to repeatedly contact us because we have failed to deliver a service or information by getting it 'right first time'.

   IV.   Employees -: We will ensure that employees have the skills and abilities to deliver effective, customer focussed services, are encouraged to work in a collaborative way and have a role in identifying and developing improvements.

   V.   Improvement -: We will use customer and staff feedback, business intelligence and performance reporting to achieve continuous service improvement.

Implementation of the strategy is supported through delivery of a 5 point action plan; progress against delivery of this action plan is reported at monthly Future Customer Board meetings.

3.0   Current Position

Customer Service Transformation

3.1   The original service migration plan consisted of 5 waves, the Future Customer Board have endorsed an incremental increase in the number of services on the wave plan which now consists of 7 waves. The table attached at appendix 1 shows services that have been migrated to date, those currently in the process of being migrated into the contact centre and those yet to be agreed. It is anticipated that the migration process will be completed by March 2018.

3.2   Customer Services produce monthly dashboards which monitor performance of all customer contact channels, dashboards are presented to the Leader of the Council, SEB and WLT each month for information. Performance relating to abandoned customer calls have improved for all services which have been migrated into customer services. Monthly statistics for individual services are now produced for Bereavement Services, Registrars and WV Active. On average call abandonment rates for services were between 33% and 85% before migration, abandonment rates for these areas are now 15% or below. For income generating or sensitive services such as registration and bereavement services abandonment rates are now less than 5%.   An example performance dashboard is attached at appendix 3.

3.3   Customer Services are currently working closely with the digital transformation team to develop Qlick view dashboards for the contact centre. Once introduced Services will be able to access these dashboards in real time in order to monitor contact centre performance for their area. This data can be manipulated and used to provide evidence for operational service improvement. It is anticipated that functionality will be available during October 2016.

Customer Services Strategy

3.4   The action plan supporting delivery of the customer service strategy is broken down into 5 strands; customer needs, Access to Council Services, first time resolution, employees and improvement. Progress against each of the identified actions is detailed in table 1 below.

Table 1.

Strategy Action Plan Update

Strand	Activity	Update
Customer Needs	Implement the target Operating Model	A restructure to align resources with outputs to achieve the target operating model was completed in July 2015; further enhancements where made in April 2016 through a restructure of the councils complaints function. Delivery of the Target Operating model is ongoing through service migration.
	Provide customers with automated notifications to confirm action / progress of enquiry e.g. bin orders pothole repairs	To date automated notifications have been trialled successfully on both the tip permit and blue badge application services. In the case of tip permits, 70% of contact has been channel shifted. In the main this channel shift can be attributed to the trust that automatic notifications have instilled in customer's using the service. The 'Report it' app was launched in August 2014 and whilst this provides automated notifications to customers it is a very administrative heavy process with a number of manual processes in the back office increasing the margin for error. The Digital Transformation Programme will enable Customer Services to deliver an improved 'report it' service from Autumn 2016. The Digital Transformation Programme will also enable improvements to be made to our 'My Account' function. Customers will be able to logon to their account to view progress of enquiries, irrespective of the channel used to report the issue.
	Exploit the email subscription	A new product, GovDelivery was

	audience to reach out to customer's pre – empting their needs. e.g. 'you previously attended this event, why not....'	procured and implemented in September 2015. This tool enables us to share subject subscription lists with neighbouring local authorities and national agencies such as the MET Office to push information to customers on request. Through the launch of the new Customer Engagement Platform (CEP) we will shortly be able to use intelligent reporting which will allow us to target Wolverhampton customers who regularly report particular types of enquiries. For example this will mean that serial missed bin reporters can be identified and supported in resolving on going issues through education, assisted collection etc. In addition, we will be able to target post-code areas or problem areas for issues such as fly tipping and graffiti. This targeted messaging can be coupled with appropriate 'push' messages (communication campaigns such as fostering etc).
	Produce 'apps' where trends indicate a benefit to the customer.	At the current time City of Wolverhampton Council has two apps – one which is available on IOS devices giving basic information regarding Council services and secondly, the Report it App. It is industry standard that apps are created to give customers/users access to information in a convenient and efficient manner – i.e. train times, events, offers. Going forward through the Digital Transformation Programme will enable us to release an app which allows customers to view their accounts online detailing the status of their current cases/enquiries.

	Engage in matrix working with the Corporate Communications team to manage social media channels.	A social media listening tool, Social SignOn was implemented in September 2015 and is used to publish and track campaigns. The web team within Customer Services monitor 'click through' and subsequent activity on digital channels. This monitoring provides a view of how successful a marketing campaign has been. The current system is likely to be replaced by the technology available through the new Customer Engagement Platform which will 'listen' for customer comments and alert the Customer Service team. The Customer Service team currently monitor social media channels for service requests and aim to respond within 2 hours. The Communications team also respond to general comments identified by Customer Services as well as managing published CWC social media content/promotions.
Access to Council Services	To support the procurement and implementation of the new digital engagement platform/ CEP	The Microsoft Dynamics platform was procured during Autumn 2015. Phase 0 of the Customer Engagement Platform (CEP) which set out to replace the historic LA CRM system which was implemented in 2004 was successfully delivered on time on the 23 March 2016. This phase provided 'like for like' capability with some small quick wins being made available through the new technology. In addition, a Master Data Management solution was launched which pulls together a single view of the customer from three source systems and will enable better management/visibility of customer

		data going forward. The next phases of the programme focusses on the launch of self-service processes online, releasing mapping/booking/payment and tracking services to the public via wolverhampton.gov.uk Releases such as online bulky waste and pest control services are expected in Autumn 2016.
	Develop a 'My Account 'function for customers to self-serve.	In April 2015 tip permits were the first online self-service task to be made available to Wolverhampton residents. This resulted in 70% of contact being channel shift from the contact centre to the online channel. Since then Revenues and Benefits have worked closely with customer Services to launch an e-billing and business rates service where customers can logon to review their council tax bill. More recently an online housing benefit application has been launched. Landlords are now also able to track payments to their tenants online through a Landlord Portal significantly reducing calls into the contact centre. The Digital Transformation Programme, will enable Customer Services to increase the pace of services released online over the next 12 months. Tracking of the number of registered users will be monitored to measure uptake/success. We currently have 13,942 registered users of My Account, 5,160 of which are signed up to tip permits and 1,554 for e-billing.
	Introduce 'Live Chat' to support	Live Chat has been trialled on two

	online self – service.	occasions in the past year – most successfully across Fostering Fortnight campaigns. This trial has enabled us to test different types of live chat software and measure the customer experience offered. Live Chat however should be used to offer convenience online and prevent use of more expensive contact channels. This will become more relevant as additional services are made available online. The chat agent function will be made available on content which has been identified as requiring agent support to guide customers through online processes. This service will help educate customers for future adoption of online services.
	Provide self-service kiosks at reception points.	The FutureSpace programme for the Civic Centre commenced during May 2016, self-service payment kiosks will be installed in early 2017.
	Promote digital access points to customers e.g. libraries.	To date, a 'check and send' service has been launched for Blue Badge applications at three locations across the city. Demand to widen this service to other locations is currently being reviewed. In addition, the launch of a standalone website for Universal Credit has seen the introduction of a locator tool for free internet provisions across the city. We are currently working with the Head of Service Improvement to explore digital access points for Council services in Leisure Centres.
	Reduce turnaround times for emails, social media and emerging channels.	This will become possible as online self-service is rolled out across more processes. For example with tip permits, customers previously had

		to phone 24 hours in advance to book onto the site – they are now able to do this instantaneously online.
	Obtain 4* (out of 4) SOCITM rating for the corporate website.	In 2015 Wolverhampton attained a 3* rating (with an overall improved percentage score). We are currently awaiting the overall 2016 rating (to be confirmed during June). However we know that this year City of Wolverhampton has scored its first 4* ratings across assessments on bin content online, reporting parking issues and for our mobile responsive and navigational elements of the website.
First Time Resolution	Migrate high volume customer contact into Customer Service department so that customers do not have to understand how the Council operates	18 services with high volumes of customer contact have been migrated into Customer Services since November 2014.
	Automate simple administrative processes which enable low complexity high volume enquiries to be satisfactorily answered at the first point of contact.	Some example of this to date are the launch of a 'find my nearest' tool in January 2015 whereby customers can find their nearest Councillor, leisure centre, GP, bus stop, and access their bin collection date/calendar. Another example is the aforementioned landlord portal service. Business Process Reengineering of service requests regarding dirty premises and noise complaints etc. have enabled process automation which has increased resolution at first point of contact.
	Reduce number of enquiries which require additional support at first point of contact.	Technical solutions have been implemented to improve administrative processes to put customer enquiries at the heart of service design. E.g. 400+ customers were enquiring about the status of

		their blue badge application. Through the development of a SharePoint solution, these calls have now reduced by over 75% as the process has been refined and status updates are now available live in the Contact Centre.
Employees	Retain Investors In People (Gold) status.	In December 2015 Customer Services attained Investors In People Gold status for a second time and the department is now accredited until 2018. Front facing employees are wearing 'Investors in People' gold badges with plaques to be displayed in the re-designed Ground Floor of the Civic Centre.
	Monitor adherence to corporate customer service standards.	Individual service reviews are currently being undertaken by the Councils transformation function. This process monitors service areas compliance with corporate standards. Going forward Qlik view Business Intelligence software will enable this information to be readily available. The Customer Service Web Team are the gate keepers for all digital channels, including websites, associated with the Council and ensure adherence to corporate standards. The Visual Identity manual is used by the Customer Service Design Team to ensure that all design and print work is consistent with corporate standards.
	Make customer service training mandatory across the organisation.	Customer Services training was made mandatory during Summer 2015. The e-learning module is shortly to be re-launched with revised content. In addition, new employees and those who do not have access to a PC can attend face to face sessions covering this content.
	Provide training for employees	A channel shift e-learning module

	about digital services and channel shift.	was launched in February 2016 and is available to all employees through The Learning Hub.
	Use balanced scorecard for customer service activity to manage quality effectively e.g. measure resolution at first point of contact.	The balanced scorecard has been developed, agreed and is utilised by the Customer Service operational team – this applies to advisors and team leaders.
Improvement	Build services that add value and market them	During the next phases of delivering the Customer Engagement Platform and website optimisation online processes will provide value such as a permanent live chat facility. An events website offer is current being developed to publicise city wide events supporting corporate objectives concerning city economy.
	Look to reduce print costs for traditional in-house publications / notices published e.g. events publications	To date, statutory notice costs have been reduced by re-designing the content which is required to be published by law. I.e. Planning Application information. The Wolverhampton Information Network which was launched during 2015 also reduced the need to print directories which are now available online.
	Produce Monthly dashboards to highlight areas of success and improvements required.	These have been produced since April 2015 and are subject to continuous improvement as more advanced reporting becomes available through the new Customer Engagement Platform and other business intelligence applications. See appendix 3
	Attract business enquiries from within and beyond the city boundaries by supporting a strong business identity across all channels.	This service area is to be engaged with as part of the Customer Service Transformation Programme. New capabilities within the Customer Engagement Platform system will allow for better monitoring of business enquiries should the service area adopt the solution.

5.0   Next Steps

5.1   There is now a critical mass of thematic services within the contact centre which will allow us to create Family Groups for specific service areas. The family groups will comprise of specialists who have in-depth knowledge of specific areas which allows them to go deeper into processes resolving more customer enquiries at first point of contact. An indicative structure showing proposed family groups is attached at appendix 2.

5.2   Customer Services are currently working with the Adult Social Care Transformation team to develop and implement the Health and Wellbeing Family group. A matrix working system will be put in place with Social Workers and Occupational Therapists rotating into the team. It is anticipated that this arrangement will allow for more decision making and assessments to be undertaken at first point of contact allowing field workers to undertake more specialist work. It is anticipated that this model will drive out both cashable and non cashable efficiencies.

5.3   In order to develop the Family Group model Customer Services will be restructured to ensure that the right employees with the right skills are placed in appropriate groups. It is anticipated that this model will be fully operational by December 2016.

6.0   Financial implications

6.1   All costs associated with the internal Customer Service Transformation Programme will be met from within existing resources.

6.2   After meeting an initial Customer Services savings target of £150,000 in 2015/16 through the deletion of a range of posts the focus is now on a savings target of £1.5 million attached to the programme. This is to be achieved by the end of 2017/18, with £850,000 of the total to be identified by the end of 2016/17. Significant progress has already been made with savings of around £310,000 already earmarked. Savings against this target are monitored and reported to the Customer Service Transformation Board on a monthly basis.
[GE/09062016/S]

7.0   Legal implications

7.1   There are no legal implications arising from this report.
[Legal Code: TS/13062016/S]

8.0   Equalities implications

8.1   Ongoing Equalities Analysis is undertaken for each service that is migrated into the Customer Services. The analysis shows a positive impact and the Family Group model will also be subject to an Equalities Analysis in terms of access to services.

9.0   Environmental implications

9.1   There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

10.0   Human resources implications

10.1   The proposed restructure will be implemented in accordance with all HR processes and procedures

11.0   Corporate landlord implications

11.1   There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

12.0   Schedule of background papers

12.1   Report to Performance and Governance Scrutiny Panel 2 February 2012.

12.2   Report to Cabinet on 10 October 2012 – Development of a Customer Services Strategy for the Council.

12.3   Report to Corporate Delivery Board and senior Executive Board October 2012 – Proposals for Customer Service Improvements in the Civic Centre.

12.4   Report to Performance Governance & Support services Scrutiny Panel 11 April 2013.

12.5   Report to Cabinet 23 April 2014 – Customer Services Review

12.6   Report to Senior Executive Board (SEB) 20 January 2015 Channel Shift – Progress to date.

12.7   Report to SEB 14 April 2015 – Customer service transformation Programme Update

12.8   Report to SEB 14 April 2015 - Customer service transformation – Channel Shift Update

12.9   Report to SEB 19 May 2015 – Customer Service Strategy

12.10   Report to Confident Capable Council Scrutiny Panel 16 June 2015 – Customer Service Strategy

Appendix 1: Migration Wave Plan

Waves of services to baseline for migration to Customer Services						
November 2013 – October 2014 (1 year)	November 2014 – February 2015 (3 months)	March 2015 – August 2015 (6 months)		September 2015 – February 2015	March 2016 – June 2016	Juuly 2016 – October 2016
Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7
▪ ◎ Council Tax billing ▪ ◎ Registration (ceremonies / certs) & Bereavement ▪ ◎ Refuse & recycling ▪ ◎Street Cleansing ▪ ◎Blue Badges ▪ ◎ Leisure Services (WV Active)	▪ ◎ Adult Social Care ▪ ◎School transport ▪ ◎School admissions ▪ ◎Free School Meals ▪ Council Tax / Housing Benefit (Tier Two) ▪ ◎Registration & Bereavement	▪ ◎ Adult Social Care - Phase 2 ▪ ◎ Learning Disabilities ▪ ◎ Physical Disabilities ▪ ◎Mental Health ▪ ◎Social Care Complaints ▪ ◎ Corporate Debt (Revenues and Benefits) ▪ ◎ Adult Education Service	▪ ◎Environmental Health – Public Protection ▪ ◎Fostering and Adoption ▪ ◎ Housing Options ▪ ◎Fleet Services ▪ ◎ Independent Living Service ▪ ◎Meals on Wheels	▪ ◎Planning & Building Control ▪ ◎ Children's Social Care ▪ ◎ Transportation/UTC ▪ ◎ Welfare Rights ▪ ◎ Public Realm	▪ M.A.S.H. ▪ The Hub: ➢ HR Support ➢ Agresso Helpdesk ➢ Payroll & Pensions ➢ Banking Services (to update) ➢ Payments and Purchasing • Housing Benefit/Council Tax/Corporate Debt (revisit) • Private Sector Housing	▪ IT Service Desk ▪ Libraries & Information Service ▪ Business Development and Investment ▪ Facilities Management ▪ *Homes Direct (Wave 8 along with additional services)*

Appendix 2: Draft Family Group Model

Family Group - General

- Switchboard
- Urban Traffic Control
- Parks Contract
- Public Realm
- Trading Standards
- Transportation
- Environmental Health
- Licensing
- Private Sector Housing
- Waste and Recycling
- Facilities
- Libraries
- Meals on Wheels

Family Group - Home and Money

- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax
- Planning and Building Control
- Welfare Rights
- Housing Options
- Corporate Debt
- Wolverhampton Homes

Family Group - Health and Wellbeing

- Adult Social Care
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Foster Care
- Blue Badges
- Carelink
- Learning Disability
- Physical Disability
- Mental Health
- Independent Living Service
- Children's Services

Family Group - Education

- Free School Meals
- Admissions
- Transport
- Adult Education

Family Group - Registration and Bereavement

- Elections
- Bereavement
- Registrations