

Progress report – Delivering Customer Focus programme

Executive summary

The Delivering Customer Focus programme has made good progress over the last six months.

- Cabinet approved the Delivering Customer Focus programme in January 2010.
- The Customer priority in the Corporate Plan (presented to Council on 18 May) fully reflects the ambitions outlined in the programme.
- The Customer priority includes clear performance and progress measures.
- Telephony opening hours were made uniform and extended to 08:30-17:30 Monday-Friday with effect from early December 2009.
- Customer research into channel and service preferences and attitudes to different technologies was completed in March 2010 and informed the design of the face to face channel.
- Face to face elements of service delivery will be home, business, or community-based for (essentially) all council services. This will result in best in class local delivery.
- Overall programme delivery is on schedule.
- Sustained service performance in Customer Services through adverse weather, changes to services, ICT work, and the election demand peak.

Proposal

That the committee:

- a) Approves the progress report on the Delivering Customer Focus programme.

Reason for proposal

This progress report was requested by the Committee at its meeting in November 2009.

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Progress report – Delivering Customer Focus programme

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide a progress report to the committee as requested by them in November 2009.
2. We are seeking the committee's endorsement of the progress to date.

Background

3. Following our successful go-live as a new council on 1 April 2009 and the election of a new council, we have the necessary elements in place to move to transformation: to provide the high-quality, low cost, customer-focused services (ie designed around the customer) which the people of Wiltshire deserve and which we have promised: in our unitary bid, in our corporate plan, and in our Customer Access to Service Strategy, agreed in June 2008.
4. Our Customer Access to Service Strategy, which was signed off in June 2008, is in two phases. The first phase, to 1 April 2009, has been completed.
5. The second phase has been developed into a programme, Delivering Customer Focus, which is being delivered under the governance of the Customer Focus Board. This document reports on the progress of this programme since November 2009.
6. The programme covers four years: 2010-2014.
7. The programme covers and works within the major programmes in the council: Workplace Transformation and service redesign through Business Transformation, and shows how the goals and outcomes of Delivering Customer Focus will in part be achieved through them.
8. The programme covers the redevelopment of our customer channels: face to face, telephony, and web, and the services customers can access through each. It also addresses the use of paper for service delivery (forms, information and correspondence) through service redesign led by Business Transformation.
9. The programme also addresses aspects of the organisation which contribute to customer focus, in particular: use of customer insight and research, communication with our customers, measurement and continuous improvement, human resources, and culture.

Main considerations for the committee

Corporate governance

10. The Delivering Customer Focus programme was updated to reflect the comments made by Overview and Scrutiny in November 2009.
11. The programme was approved by Cabinet on 26 January 2010.
12. Cabinet requested that the report was clearer about the outcomes for customers and how we would monitor progress. Cabinet requested progress reports every six months.
13. Cabinet also requested that the programme addressed the language the council uses and our correspondence with customers.
14. The principal goals for the programme and resulting outcomes for customers have been distilled into the Customer priority of the Corporate Plan 2010-2014. Customer is the first priority in the Plan.
15. The Corporate Plan 2010-2014 has been approved by Cabinet and is being debated by full Council on 18 May 2010

Programme progress

Customer research

16. During October 2009-March 2010 we undertook qualitative research into our customers' views on how and where face to face services should be delivered, on using various types of self-service technology, and on opening hours and the depth of service they expected.
17. Customers told us that they preferred services by appointment rather than "turn up and wait". They also said that they would like face to face service delivered in their homes or in a convenient location nearby.
18. Customers told us that they would be willing to use self-service technology provided they could be shown how to use it.
19. Customers told us that they expected a full service to be available whenever the phone lines were open, not a partial (eg message taking) service outside our "normal office hours".

Face to face channel

20. The Corporate Plan Customer priority includes a commitment to: "enable customers to access the council's top 20 services...through scheduled appointments in their own homes or business premises" (or nearby community location).

21. This change reflects the way that services which are currently delivered in council offices are being designed, as a result of the Lean systems interventions led by Business Transformation.
22. This way of delivering face to face service is better for customers, economic for the council, and has a reduced carbon footprint. It also fits with the hub office footprint which will result from the Workplace Transformation Programme (WTP).
23. These changes to face to face service delivery are an integral part of the Workplace Transformation programme, and have been presented to the WTP Board, the Staffing Policy Committee, and the Joint Consultative Committee.
24. The implications for customers are that service delivery will be by appointment. Appointments will typically be made by telephone and will be for a specific, date, time, location and officer. The appointment set-up will include telling the customer what information they need to have ready for their appointment.
25. Customers will also be able to make these appointments at 20 local locations, one in each community area. In some locations, this will be face to face across a counter, in other locations this will be via "virtual face to face" using a self-service kiosk, with support where appropriate.
26. This change to how face to face services will be delivered will be communicated to Area Boards during the next two months.
27. Staff have raised the question of their safety and Paul Collier is leading the development of a revised Lone Working Policy and toolkit to support this. His work includes the development of a database of individuals who pose a risk to officers.
28. Some services – for example Registration – do not lend themselves to this model of face to face delivery. These services will continue to be delivered in our premises.

Telephony channel

29. Opening hours for the telephony channel have been extended slightly and made consistent in all locations from December 2009. Our main service lines are now open for calls from 8:30-5:30 Monday to Friday.
30. Customers making calls to our main numbers out of hours are now connected to a menu of options (press 1 for..., press 2 for...) and then a transfer to the out of hours service. This replaces a lengthy message with several different phone numbers, which the customer had to write down and then make a second call.
31. We continue to work with Wiltshire Police and Swindon Borough Council on a joint solution for handling our out of hours calls.
32. We have begun work to define and communicate voicemail standards. However, the right use of voicemail is largely dictated by the service being

provided. Work on this is continuing and is an integral part of the service redesigns in Business Transformations.

Organisation development and culture change

33. During June-December 2009 all staff in Customer Services went through a basic induction in systems thinking. This instils a culture of right first time, once and done, measuring what matters to customers, and continuous improvement.
34. During February and March, Customer Services collected and analysed all the demand on our telephony channel as a baseline and to inform service improvement work, both within Customer Services and jointly with the main service.
35. Our value (useful to customers) contact comprised 56% and preventable (not useful to customers) contact was 44%.
36. The proportion of value and preventable demand is one of the key measures for service performance.
37. The programme team worked with the Performance team to develop a set of Customer Focus measures for the organisation. These will be used to report performance and progress on the Customer priority of the Corporate Plan.
38. The following measures are in use: call volumes, connection rates; proportion of value and preventable demand, volume of face to face transactions, volume of web hits and volume of emails.
39. For July 2009-March 2010 these are as follows:
 - Calls in = 790,643
 - Connection rate = 89.6%
 - Value demand:preventable demand = 56%:44%
 - Face to face visits = 111,504
 - Web hits = 7.343million
 - Email to Customer Services = 21,437.
40. These performance figures reflect the very hard work of the Customer Services teams, through the lengthy team member appointment process, adverse weather, council tax and school admissions peaks, changes to service delivery, changes to our telephony and ICT infrastructure, and a significant investment in the team's development and improvement.
41. We are working on a way to measure customer satisfaction with a service at the point of delivery to the customer (ie not a generalised satisfaction with the council overall). We hope to implement this in Q3 2010.
42. We have worked with Barry Pirie on including Customer Focus in our performance management and in our employee recognition for all employees in all services. His proposals have been reviewed and endorsed by the Customer Focus Board.
43. We have redeveloped the Customer module of the corporate induction online.

44. Milestones from DCF Programme January 2010, as at May 2010.

Year	External: customers and communities	Internal: staff, information and infrastructure.
2009/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consistent opening hours Monday-Friday. (<i>Telephony achieved; face to face planned for June/July 2010</i>) ▶ Short-term solution for 24 x 7 access to safety and enforcement services. (<i>Achieved</i>). ▶ Model service communication for one service. (<i>No progress</i>) ▶ Standards in place for voicemail, email, and letters/written responses. (<i>In progress</i>). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Basic measures for telephony and for fulfilment (cross-organisation demand capture at first point of contact) (<i>Achieved</i>). ▶ “Customer focus” implemented in our performance management: objectives, work plans, development, and recognition (<i>Part achieved</i>). ▶ “Customer focus” embedded in induction (<i>Achieved</i>). ▶ Developing and implementing standards for customer service across the organisation, including improving our skills in working with our customers (continues in 2010/11) (<i>In progress</i>). ▶ Customer focus awareness/ influencing campaign (internal communications to staff and members) (<i>Minimal progress</i>).
2010/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ First set of transformed/ redesigned services go live county-wide. (<i>Revenues, development control, and highways services</i>). ▶ Golden numbers for transformed/ redesigned services. (<i>Next new golden number will be 0300 456 0102, for waste and recycling services; we ran a highly successful single county-wide elections service at the May 2010 General Election</i>). ▶ New opening hours introduced for telephony and face to face. (<i>Included in Corporate Plan and subject to customer research</i>). ▶ Joint 24 x 7 access to safety, enforcement, and treatment services. (<i>Working with Police and Swindon BC on a potential shared number</i>). ▶ Web channel achieves retail business quality for key web transactions. (<i>Formalised within Corporate Plan – Customer</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ “Work anywhere” telephony goes live. (<i>Workplace Transformation Programme [WTP]</i>) ▶ Salisbury hub goes live. (<i>WTP</i>). ▶ “Customer focus” embedded in leadership style and behaviours, through leadership development and role-modelling. (<i>People Strategy and Shaping the Future</i>). ▶ Developing and implementing standards for customer service across the organisation, including improving our skills in working with our customers (continues from 2009/10). ▶ Customer insight required for service planning and budgeting.

	<p><i>priority</i>).</p> <p>▶ Community-based generic customer access: consistent and good quality service signposting available at libraries, town councils and visitor information centres. (<i>Integral to face to face channel design, as above.</i>)</p> <p>▶ Service communications all raised to model communications standard.</p>	
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Environmental impact of the proposal

45. Delivering Customer Focus is expected to reduce the environmental impact of delivering service, by reducing wasted work, by reducing customer travel, and by improving service delivery on electronic channels.
46. There are no environmental legislative implications for Delivering Customer Focus.

Equality and diversity impact of the proposal

47. Delivering Customer Focus supports and enables equality and diversity in our service design and delivery.
48. Delivering Customer Focus is the programme which we propose to use to deliver our Customer Access to Services Strategy (2008). The Equality Impact Assessment for the Customer Access Strategy stated that:

“There is a HIGH implication in the development and implementation of this strategy for the delivery and promotion of fair, non-discriminatory and equitable access to services.

Risk assessment

49. The principal risk of not proceeding with the programme is a reduced likelihood of achieving customer focus in our services.
50. This will materially affect the quality of our services to customers and their satisfaction with the service and the council as a whole. In addition, we will have failed to deliver on a corporate priority and one of the three commitments in the unitary bid.

Financial implications

51. Delivering Customer Focus programme is resourced to a level at which the current scope can be delivered to time, quality and cost.
52. Delivering Customer Focus programme supports the achievement of our savings and revenue goals in the MTFS.

53. This statement has been verified by a finance officer.

Legal implications

54. Are there any legal implications which need to be taken into consideration, including any human rights implications?

55. Also consider if there are any ethical governance issues, ie how this will affect maintaining and improving the reputation of the council and local government generally and building trust and confidence in the council.

56. This statement has been verified by a legal officer.

Options considered

57. Not applicable.

Conclusion

58. The Delivering Customer Focus programme is making good progress and resulting in improved service to customers across the organisation.

Background papers

The following unpublished (internally presented) documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

- Customer research report to Customer focus Board (March 2010)
- Report to Customer Focus Board (March 2010) on transforming our face to face channel.

Appendices

None.