

Towards One Council



Customer Access to Services Strategy: 1 April 2009 to 2012 Version 1.0

Author: John Rogers
Created: 12 May 2008 (version 0.1)
Revisions: 29 May 2008 (version 0.2)
9 June 2008 (version 1.0)



Timeline for discussion about and decisions on this Customer Access to Services Strategy

- 15 May – Customer Focus Board (version 0.1) ✓
- 16 May – CO/AD meeting (version 0.1) ✓
- 22 May – Members' seminar on Customer Access (version 0.1) ✓
- 28 May – first review by Equality and Diversity Officer ✓
- 3 June – Joint Overview and Scrutiny Task Group (JOSTG) (version 0.2) ✓
- 5 June – Joint Implementation Team (version 0.2) ✓
- 6 June – preliminary Equality Impact Assessment by Equality & Diversity Officer (version 0.2) ✓
- 17 June – Implementation Executive (version 1.0) ✓

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Task Group (JOSTG)

JOSTG have been engaged throughout the development of this document and endorse this Customer Access to Service Strategy to LGR Joint Overview and Scrutiny.

Joint Implementation Team (JIT)

JIT endorsed the Customer Access to Service Strategy on 5 June 2008.

Union consultation

The union representative has been sent previous versions and has been invited to meet and discuss the Strategy.

Customer Focus Board (CFB)

The CFB governs the work in scope of the Customer Access to Services Strategy. They have been continually involved in the work underpinning this strategy, and have reviewed and debated previous versions of this document.

1. Summary

The foundations of Wiltshire's bid to provide unitary local government and deliver the aspirations for communities which are expressed in the Local Government White Paper are:

- high quality, low cost, customer-focused services;
- local, open, transparent decision-making;
- working together to support Wiltshire's communities, building social capital.

A further key requirement for the future is that the services which we provide or commission must be sustainable in the long term; likewise, that all services are fairly provided, equitable and fully accessible to all members of society throughout the service journey of awareness, contact and fulfilment.

This document outlines a customer access to services strategy which fulfils these requirements.

It has two major stages:

- achieving completely reliable access to services at 1 April 2009, with access foundations for the future;
- creating transformed access to service, delivered by a council working in a radically different way with our partners and communities, by 2012.

At 1 April 2009 we will have implemented:

- A consistent face to face service covering both (current) CC and DC services at each main location
- One number to contact the council plus golden numbers which go direct to specific service areas
- A new website which is an effective channel for customer transactions
- Email which goes to service inboxes, and where appropriate, includes e-forms which capture transactional information at the earliest point.

By 2012 we will have:

- Implemented more widespread local service access.
- Implemented theme or life event-based services at the First Point of Contact across all service areas.
- Moved to a service strategy which is pro-active and focuses on prevention and dealing with the root causes of service demand.
- Co-delivery of services which are appropriate to the resources of the diversity of communities with which we work, and which builds social capital.

Foundational to achieving both these stages are:

- Fostering a consistent customer-focused culture across all the new council.
- Creating and using community and customer intelligence to prioritise, design and evaluate services.
- Creating a First Point of Contact service, managed as a virtual service.
- Adopting customer focus approach and systems thinking method for service design.
- Early adoption of technology which will enable virtual face to face service from remote locations eg video-link.
- Developing our workforce so that it has the skills, knowledge and authority to deliver these transformed services; organising and managing our workforce accordingly.
- Changing our corporate and business planning process, and the roles and remits of our political and management groups, in order to make this strategy work in practice.

2. Introduction and context

2.1 Introduction

The foundations of Wiltshire's bid to provide unitary local government and deliver the aspirations for communities which are expressed in the Local Government White Paper are:

- high quality, low cost, customer-focused services;
- local, open, transparent decision-making;
- working together to support Wiltshire's communities, building social capital.

A further key requirement for the future is that the services which we provide or commission must be sustainable in the long term; likewise that all services are fairly provided, equitable and fully accessible to all members of society throughout the service journey of awareness, contact and fulfilment.

These aspirations can only be achieved through transformed service delivery and access to those services. However, transformation cannot be achieved at the expense of reliable service access and delivery during, in particular, the period of converging five existing councils into one new council and the start of the new council on 1 April 2009.

As a result, this document outlines a customer access to services strategy in two stages:

- **achieving completely reliable access to services at 1 April 2009**, with access foundations for the future;
- **creating transformed access to service**, delivered by a council working in a radically different way with our partners and communities, **by 2012**.

This transformed council will be pro-active rather than predominantly reactive. It will focus as much on the prevention of problems (ie actively working to minimise failure demand) arising in the first place as on the "cure" of their "symptoms" (ie not just "waiting" for demand to arrive and then responding well). It will be able to do this because it:

- understands profoundly our communities and customers – their priorities and aspirations;
- addresses root causes of service demand through intervening in the "whole system" ie community leadership and place-shaping in the widest sense;
- engages with our citizens and communities over our contribution and theirs;
- redesigns access – ie awareness, contact and fulfilment – to our resulting new/future services wholly and entirely around our customers, in all their diversity;
- continuously improves its services using robust customer and performance information which is both qualitative and quantitative.

The remainder of this document describes access to service and the council at 1 April 2009 and at 2012; what it will be like for our customers, citizens and communities. For 1 April 2009 this is fairly detailed and specific; for 2012 it is articulated as a proposed direction of travel. It should be emphasised that these proposals build on previous thinking and improvements, rather than being a departure from or replacement for them.

2.2 Context – key elements

LGR – 1 April 2009 obligations and constraints

Although the unitary bid describes very significant change, we have an obligation to sustain service delivery through to and at 1 April 2009 alongside large practical and commercial constraints. This means that a great deal of effort and attention during the next 10-12 months will go on ensuring that services work effectively and equitably from 1 April, and that in consequence the *majority* of the transformational change will be delivered during the three years following that.

Customer-focused transformation

All the Wiltshire councils have become more customer-focused in the last two-three years. The current context therefore includes some significant transformation work which must be continued. These initiatives include the Business Management Programme and creation of a Shared Services Team, and the FOCUS programme (transformation of adult social care).

In addition, Customer Focus and Systems Thinking (sometimes called LEAN) have been established as the framework and method for delivering transformation of services, and we are developing increasing capacity and expertise in these areas.

Introduction of Community Area Boards and increased delegation and decision-making

Community Area Boards will have decision-making powers based on input from their communities and local service users regarding service priorities and access.

Equality Duties

Our statutory Race, Gender and Disability Equality Duties place strong emphasis on equality and fairness in relation to access to services. With the emerging Single Equalities Duty, even greater emphasis will be based on service access issues relating to all strands of diversity.

Financial context

The CSR 07 settlement and efficiency targets, and the bid's cost reduction commitments, all combined with the budgetary effects of inflation, have resulted in financial challenges for the new council. There are also major capital projects with currently incomplete funding.

Transformation to the new model will therefore take place in a context of limited funds and capacity. However, *this transformation will also be the route to the savings* which will make our services sustainable, so making and taking opportunities to proceed will be critical.

2.3 Context – implications

Taken overall, the context is strongly favourable to customer-focused transformation; it provides impetus and enough restriction over the options. However, there are significant short term constraints, pressures to improve, and fierce competition for resources: balancing these during the short-medium term will be challenging, and sometimes difficult.

Within this context, we will strive to change both culture and service design and delivery as quickly as possible. *We will continue to make visible progress by 1 April 2009 – ie there will be further tangible differences for our customers over and above those already achieved eg in council tax benefits, blue badges provision, and pothole filling*, and we will have achieved critical mass before 2012. The sections below outline the major stages that we believe are achievable, by April 2009, and by 2012, and the road map to get there.

The next section outlines the proposed principles and major building blocks of our approach to customer-focused access to services. We will develop and implement these over the next four years, starting while we complete the transition to the new council.

3. Transforming access to services – key principles and approach

3.1 Customer focus: what and why

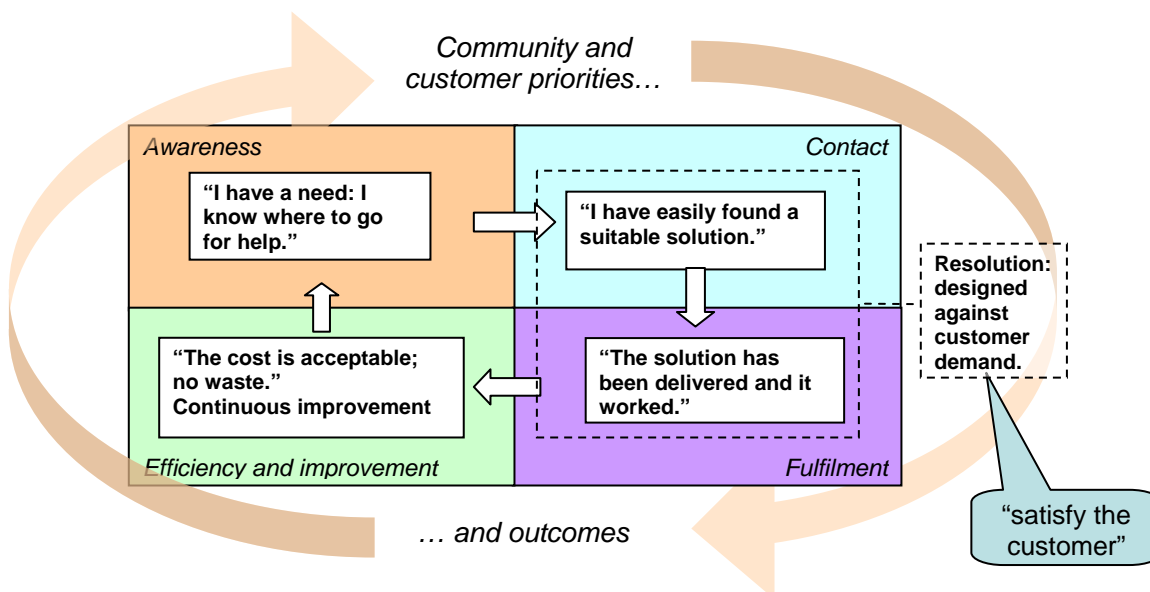
A customer-focused council designs all aspects of its services, processes, and structures around the needs and preferences of the customers of those services.

A customer-focused council takes full account of customer demand in setting service priorities, in combination with political/democratic priorities, community consultation and planning, and strategic/national/ regional requirements. It also makes full use of its knowledge about the customer (customer insight and customer demand data) to design and improve services.

In consequence, a customer-focused council delivers the maximum amount of service possible from every £ because the minimum possible waste is incurred. It spends the minimum possible on preventing people from receiving service, and it constantly strives to improve services to the best that they can be.

A customer-focused council regards service access as fulfilment, not just contact; it aims to deliver the service (fulfil the service request) in the way the customer wants, every time, and organises itself accordingly.

The customer journey through a customer-focused council looks like this:



A customer-focused council regards customer service as everyone's job, not just the job of a team called Customer Service. In consequence, it does not acknowledge a distinction between front line and back office – instead, it has service teams doing work which is organised to suit the customer and with the optimum flow.

A customer-focused council strives to make all parts of the community aware of its services, targeting particularly those who can easily be excluded. It ensures that the services are accessible, fair and equitable to all, conducting and acting upon regular equality impact assessments of service planning and delivery. A customer focused-council is transparent in all its dealings and decisions.

A customer-focused council takes seriously its purpose, which either is or depends on providing services to its customers and communities. A customer-focused council will be welcomed as a credible partner to the communities – a key element in building social capital and future service sustainability.

A customer-focused council puts the customer first; customer focus is common sense and is also a powerful and cost-effective route to transformation. A customer-focused council is in the interests of the members, the customers of the services, the communities receiving services, the tax-payers, and the employees.

3.2 Customer-focused culture

Customer focus is one of the key elements of the new council's culture as outlined in the document *What we will be like*; the list below defines a customer-focused culture in more detail.

When people approach us for service, and when we deliver services to them:

- we will start from "the customer is right" – it's our job to provide a suitable service to and with them; we will empower staff to use their judgement and discretion;
- we will treat customers courteously, listen well, and act; we will be open, transparent and fair; we will respond well to complaints and make use of them to learn and continuously improve;
- the customer will only make one visit or call for each request for service, wherever possible – so we won't send customers from place to place or department to department;
- whenever we can't resolve a service request straight away, we will follow up delivery and keep the customer informed, unless they prefer otherwise;
- where there is a choice between the customer's convenience and ours, the customer will come first;
- we will expect the same level of customer focus throughout service delivery – everyone willing to go the extra mile to solve the customer's problem;

- we will be open for business – end to end – at times which suit the customer: hand-overs from First Point of Contact will have appropriate cover throughout our business hours;
- our culture and behaviours will treat all our customers as of equal value and with equal rights to a service which is non-discriminatory and effective;
- everyone (all staff) will be able to receive a request for service constructively and pass it on to the right place, to be fulfilled.

Although we have made progress in this area, we have some way to go before our culture is consistently customer-focused, and we have a consistent and shared understanding of “customer” across all services. We will address the gaps over the coming year and beyond.

3.3 Equalities Impact Assessment

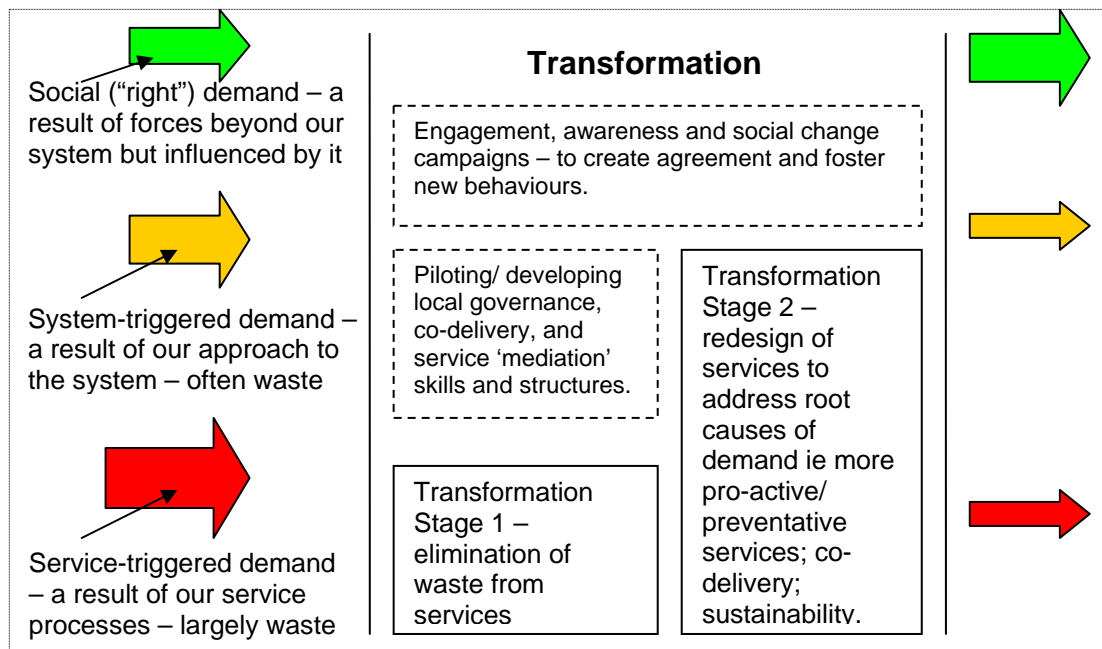
There is a HIGH implication in the development and implementation of this strategy for the delivery and promotion of fair, non-discriminatory and equitable access to services. The strategy aims to:

- adopt, promote and implement a more customer-focused approach;
- promote equality of opportunity in both access to service and service development;
- eliminate any potential discrimination in access to services;
- promote and encourage active citizenship of all in our diverse communities;
- promote involvement of diverse communities in developing services access.

3.4 Becoming proactive, partnering better, and addressing root causes of demand

We are major shapers of the total “system” in which we deliver services: much of the demand to which we respond to is currently generated because of the way we go about our business. There will always be demand to which we must respond; however, we will develop services and approaches which focus on preventing demand from arising in the first place, for example, road potholes, graffiti, or fly-tipping.

These proposals are presented in diagrammatic form here, and outlined in more detail in the section below on Access to Services at 2012.



As part of this, we will create and take opportunities to partner on service delivery, especially with community organisations, governed and mediated locally wherever possible.

Example: the churchwarden and flood signs (Clarence call). A churchwarden from a parish on the farthest southern edge of the county called in to ask about flood signs outside the church “now the floods have gone”. His question: “would you like me to keep them until the next time if floods [and put the signs out] or will you collect them?”

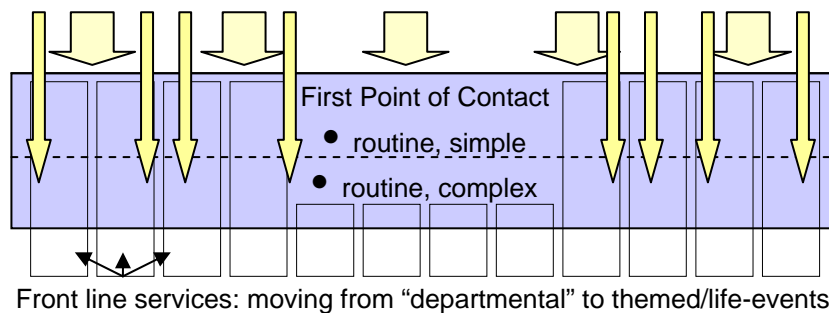
*Our response was that we would collect them, and we thereby missed an opportunity for co-delivery, increased social capital, and the opportunity to build more trust in us as a partner. **Our communities and customers can only take part in delivering services if we enable them.** This involves local knowledge and authority, and a more balanced approach to risk and control.*

3.5 Customer-led service delivery at the First Point of Contact

Within this context, we propose a First Point of Contact (FPC) service which comprises the services which our customers tell us they want dealt with and completed in one transaction. FPC applies across all channels, although different parts of each service within it will use different channels, shaped using customer insight and demand data.

First Point of Contact will not be a separate service 'silo'. First Point of Contact is a coordinated approach to first point of contact fulfilment which applies across all our services and departments – a virtual service.

The diagram overleaf therefore *does not* describe organisation structure or geographic locations, nor is it a model for a generic telephony plus face to face “customer service” operation (though these will all be elements of the solution we develop).



Instead, the diagram (at this stage) represents a “box” of services which are meaningful to the customer and which can be delivered at the first point of contact, via one or more channels and sourced from one or more departments, functions, or organisations. Example services may include “Moving in, moving out”, “Cleaner, greener” or “Birth” – see under section 3.6 below.

The “box” therefore also includes the people who work at the first point of contact (wherever they sit in the organisation), and the skills, knowledge, resources and authority they will need to deliver these services.

For example, the services in the FPC “box” may be delivered by a social services case coordinator, by a parish steward, by a librarian, a fitness expert, a benefits assessor, or a surveyor – across a front desk, over the phone, at a customer’s home, or out in the community – as well as by customer care professionals with wide knowledge and specific expertise.

3. 6 Customer insight and segmentation

We will also design our services around customer (user) segments, thinking through and validating with customer insight and demand data the services they do or wish to use, and the channels they prefer to access them by. The main segments (at a high level) are:

Segment	Service demand	Channel preferences/service expectations
Person	Civic duty and “universal” services (eg roads, waste) – nb also applies to business customers; elective use of local government services like culture, sport and leisure.	Transactional/information; high automation, high volume; 24/7; low personal contact. Other services: convenient, good quality, reliable.
Person or (often) business seeking clearance to start or continue	Planning, development and building control; licensing of various types. Businesses quoting or tendering for business from the council.	Highly definable and generally predictable. Customers looking for convenience, clarity and consistency; sometimes need basic advice/ explanation but often don't.
Person with an issue	Ranges from reporting graffiti or pests, to “lost my job and partner left me”.	Intermediates usually needed ie telephony and F2F; some scope for automation/24/7/web; medium volume; moderate personalisation.
Person in crisis or needing sustained support	People for whom an intervention is required, whether short term or longer term.	Intermediates always needed ie telephony and F2F and often mobile services; low volume and high investment; high personalisation.

Note that disability, communication needs or language ability is not a primary factor in segmentation. The requirement to make services accessible to all will affect the channels via which services are made available. We expect that face to face and telephone delivery of all services will be a permanent element of our access to services, along with suitable language/communication support.

First Point of Contact, segments, and service delivery

In essence, we will provide services via channels which are right for the customer *and* right for the council. Through enabling customers who prefer to use electronic channels to do so, we will make more resources available for services which are better delivered by other channels, and to support full inclusion for other customers.

The First Point of Contact service will deliver a very large percentage of routine and simple transactions, and an evolving range of routine and complex transactions, on a service by service basis.

“Routine and simple” transactions broadly correlate to the transactions sought by the “Person” segment; these will predominate on web and telephony channels.

Routine and complex transactions broadly correlate to the service demand from the “Person or business seeking clearance to start or continue” and “Person with an issue” segment; these will predominate on telephony and face-to-face channels, but will often have substantial elements available on the web channel.

3.7 Service design – themes and transactions

Service “chunks” and specifics within the FPC “box” will be developed in partnership with each front line service. Over time, we propose to build round the customer whole and holistic services which include a range of transactions, rather than are built round our departmental structures.

Examples of these themed services might include:

- Moving in, moving out. A routine and complex version of moving in would include, for example, services and information for a family with a child with special needs.
- Major life events: birth, marriage, divorce, death.
- Green, clean, smart, safe.
- Doing business better.
- Build it.
- Access to support.
- Getting around.
- What's on.
- Have your say.
- Education and learning: school, college, training, classes for work or leisure.

Services presented and provided in this way join up elements from across the council and also our partners, for example the police in the "clean" and "safe" theme areas. This approach has been discussed with leading politicians and with the LGR Front Line Services group, as well as the Customer Focus working group, and to date there has been agreement in principle.

The section on Access to Services at 2012 will outline the route we propose to take to develop and implement these services, some of which may be introduced by 1 April 2009.

Access to service: 01 April 2009

4.1 Introduction and highlights

Of necessity, customer access at 01/04/09 will primarily be transition with a heavy focus on ensuring that we have working contact facilities – face to face, telephony, email and website.

This is because:

- we have major short-term constraints (infrastructure, legal, capacity) and major dependencies within and beyond the LGR programme;
- we have a list of "must do's" and grade A reputational risks;
- and almost everything is different, in each council.

However, we will be able to incorporate within our programme (outlined in sections 4.2ff below) some foundations for the future and some improvements, both to our contact facilities and to the evolving First Point of Contact service.

Our contact facilities will include:

- Improved **face-to-face** premises in Salisbury; continuing face-to-face premises elsewhere.
- One **telephone** number for general contact with the council and simple transactions, plus well-publicised "golden numbers" to get customers straight through to specific services.
- New single **website** designed around customer requirements (find out, register, book, vote, pay) and life-event or service themes (TBC).
- **Emails** which request service will be driven off the website and will, where relevant, incorporate **e-forms** which capture the relevant information at the start of the process. These emails will have an automated response acknowledgement with a unique reference number, and will enable customers to track progress on line.

Our services will be delivered or enabled by:

- High-quality, well-trained and well-informed staff dealing in a consistent way with customers face-to-face and by telephone, building on our existing good practice and service culture.
- Changes to First Point of Contact job descriptions and person specifications, if appropriate.
- A Customer Relationship Management system which provides service information and scripts to FPC staff and tracks open service requests.
- Customer insight and demand information by segment, service and geography (TBC), made available to service managers.
- A comprehensive customer communication and awareness programme, in tandem with Front Line Services.

This reflects our view that the best scope for tangible improvement by 1 April 2009 lies in refining the way we deal with customers, building the team and its capability, and staff training and development.

The following sections describe our plans for the four major channels at 1 April 2009.

4.2 Face to face

Customers will be able to access services at the current main face-to-face front desk service locations in Chippenham, Devizes, and Trowbridge, and Amesbury and Mere. We will offer the same or more appropriate premises in Salisbury. Each location will offer services which combine the current DC and CC front-desk scope.

All front desk staff will work at a Wiltshire Council-branded reception area. Premises will be fully DDA compliant and will offer suitable language/communication support for non-English speakers and those with communication needs. Staff will receive induction training about the new Council's culture and values, and our approach to equality, diversity and fairness. They will have service training, coaching and support from team leaders and managers. Front desk staff will usually be "triple-channel", delivering service over the phone and in response to emails, depending on demand fluctuations during the day and week.

The "system" ie the way we deal with our customers, the services available, and standards will be consistent across the county wherever possible – especially in services which are high profile – though there will be geographic differences in some services, ie wherever that front-line service has not been redesigned or consolidated. All staff will be trained to offer related services based on the circumstances of the person in front of them.

All front desk staff will be supported by an extended range of service scripts and will have access to a single CRM system which has merged the customer's services history and a single contacts directory for the whole council.

Face-to-face service decisions to be made and implemented prior to 1 April 2009:

- Face to face location in Salisbury: Pennyfarthing House is not preferred. We will analyse face to face demand, and will seek to relocate to more suitable premises.
- Organising face to face delivery at two sites in Trowbridge; we will use Bradley Road as the main service outlet at 1 April and will manage this by communication and organising staff.
- Extent of branding at face to face service/receptions, by 1 April 2009. Staff uniform or not.
- Main face to face locations: opening hours; Saturday opening.
- Other generic face-to-face locations eg Contactpoint: service scope and hours of opening.
- Specific service outlets eg leisure centres, depots: responses to requests for service.
- Other council premises eg social services offices: responses to requests for service.
- Collaboration with/delivery via other public bodies, especially town and parish councils.

4.3 Telephone

There will be one (probably 03XX) number for general enquiries and simple routine transactions, for switchboard, and for accessing services when you don't know what service you need. Staff answering these calls will resolve the request where they can, and otherwise do a direct handover to a person in service team (within or beyond First Point of Contact service) or, on the very rare occasions when the other service team members are all engaged, arrange for a call back.

Information taken at this point will be entered onto the CRM system so there is no need for the customer to repeat it, and visibility of unfulfilled requests.

There will also be several "Golden Numbers" which will be themed around services, topics/purpose, events or life stages (as above, under Service Design and Delivery). Calls to these numbers will bring customers through to service teams who can complete a substantial amount of service at the first point of contact, or continue to progress a larger or more complex case in liaison with specialist service professionals. The Golden Numbers will be thoroughly promoted to customers and potential customers ahead of 1 April 2009.

As above, telephony staff will benefit from the same induction training about the new Council's culture and values, and will have service training, coaching and support from team leaders and managers. Telephony staff will usually be "triple-channel", also delivering service over the counter and in response to emails, depending on demand fluctuations during the day and week.

Telephony service decisions to be made and implemented prior to 1 April 2009:

- Selection of 03XX number(s); costs to council; costs to customers; impact on customers' call-inclusive packages; use of 0800 number(s) for selected services – we are completing the investigation into all of these.
- Service theming and Golden Numbers – agreeing which themes and by when.
- Nature and extent of, and communication about, out-of-hours and emergency contact.
- External dependencies: WAN (Wide Area Network); telephony hardware and software implementation; single instance of Lagan CRM.

4.4 Web

The Council will have a new website which will work as a service channel for the transactions that customers wish to perform (eg report, register, book, pay) and the information they wish to access, in the same way that eg retail services and leading public sector websites work. Customers will be able to start, continue or complete any web service via telephone or face to face channels.

It will use everyday language and strenuously avoid local government jargon, or authoritarian or stilted language. The website is also an ideal place to launch and begin delivery of themed/life event services.

The first time an individual visitor attempts to reach a service page where there are geographic (ie ex-DC) service differences, the website will ask for a postcode; it will then take the customer to the right page and "remember" the postcode for all future visits.

Web channel service decisions to be made and implemented prior to 1 April 2009:

- Introduction of Wiltshire Council website/decommissioning existing websites
- Website structure and design – ensuring that it is an effective service delivery channel rather than simply a communication channel.

4.5 Email

Emails from customers will (wherever possible) go to a service inbox rather than a named individual. These will be dealt with by a combination of Customer Service staff and other designated people with access to the mailbox.

The same email inbox addresses will be used in the website; whenever the customer wishes to send an email from the website, a structured form will appear which collects the information needed to process the request for service or information.

Emails to the council will generate a unique reference number and an automatic acknowledgement which lets the customer know what will happen next. For some services, further updates may be generated as the request proceeds, and the customer will have the option to track progress online.

4.6 Letters/paper channel

This is an important channel for many customers and services and needs to be integrated with the other channels. The letters/paper channel is being handled by another part of the LGR programme (Resources workstream) and the relationship between the channels and the processes for dealing with paper service requests have not yet been defined. This will be done as part of the Day 1 detailed planning work which will commence shortly.

4.7 Other

Video-link, digital TV and SMS channels will not be widely used, if at all, at 1/4/09 because of our limited capacity and the cumulative risk that implementing them poses to the main channels.

However, in view of the rising costs of transport and our customers' growing expectations and preferences for these channels, we will:

- Take any readily available opportunities to use them, service by service.
- Develop a plan to implement them rapidly and as a priority, following the launch of the new council.

4.8 Transition and foundations of transformation – what it will take to get there at 1 April 2009

- Customer contact channels projects*: F2F, telephony, web, email – LGR transition.
- FPC system*: process development and people preparation; service scripting; information management and delivery (CRM, contacts directory) – LGR transition.
- Paper mail/letters solution – Resources workstream, LGR transition.
- WAN and telephony (technical infrastructure) projects – LGR transition.
- Customer Focus organisation-wide interventions*: customer and community insight and research; OD; HR; communications/campaign – LGR transition.
- Scoping of FPC service at 1/4/09* – LGR transition; formation of Shared Services Team.
- Initial customer focus/systems interventions with front line services* – LGR FLS workstream (eg Development Control and (potentially) Streetscene); with other programmes (eg FOCUS (Charteris)).
- Resourcing an appropriate project team* to develop and implement all the changes needed to achieve “completely reliable access to services at 1 April 2009, with access foundations for the future” – LGR transition; council management teams.
- Capital investment of £X.XM* (*currently defining this*) – LGR transition.
- Amalgamation (from 1/10/08?) of current customer services teams*, as the first element of the FPC service – LGR transition; formation of Shared Services Team.
- Political and corporate leadership and sponsorship, and union support.

* included in Customer Focus, Access and Contact Workstream PID, currently under development.

Transformed access to services: from now to 2012

5.1 Introduction

Transformation will start in parallel with transition: not only laying foundations, but theming services around the customer and moving the council from reactive responder to its “system” to proactive shaper of its “system”. This move from reactive to proactive will require engagement with our customers and communities as well as interventions across our services and both political and management structures. The outcome will be a council which operates in a completely different way, using a different “worldview” to make decisions, to work with customers and communities, and to deliver services.

This council will deliver the unitary bid’s aspirations of

- high quality, low cost, customer focussed services;
- local, open, transparent decision-making;
- working together to support Wiltshire’s communities, building social capital.

5.2 Transforming Wiltshire’s system

Wiltshire’s local government is the single most influential shaper of its own “system” – the combination of communities, demand and delivery. It therefore is able to shape its own demand, depending in part on the interventions (ie services) that the council itself delivers. How this would work, and work differently from today, is best explained through an example – *not a proposal for a specific service*, simply a means of bringing the ideas to life and enabling discussion.

Streetscene – a possible future model

The state of places where people live, work and go for leisure has a large influence over their general contentment and satisfaction. So Streetscene is a strategic service in terms of how Wiltshire is perceived by residents and visitors.

This section illustrates how recent developments in Streetscene could be taken further forward as a potential route to transformation, creating a more proactive service which both generated and relied on social capital – and the parallel changes that this would involve.

Parish Stewards have been introduced relatively recently by WCC. Their work already has a strong preventative element eg keeping gullies clear to reduce flooding, and they also work with parish councillors on local requests, at their own or their managers’ discretion.

During March, WCC experimented by asking Parish Stewards to fix potholes when they found them, resulting in 600 fixes in one month, at no additional cost and without the demand passing through Clarence or the highways work management system.

In addition, the potholes intervention team are looking at new materials and machinery to improve the longevity of fixes, and to reduce how often potholes happen.

Service transformation in Streetscene – across roads and pavement maintenance, litter, fly-tipping, graffiti, signage, grass-cutting, and street cleansing etc could look at further technical or workforce roles changes to reduce the frequency and impact of this demand on our services system

However, system transformation in Streetscene could reinvest savings from improvements in the service to address root causes, particularly where attitudes and social acceptability/unacceptability are a potential factor: increased recycling, wearing safety belts, or reducing your carbon footprint being examples of successful or emerging changes to attitudes.

System interventions to affect attitudes – among many other possibilities – to prevent degeneration before it becomes expensive to fix might include:

- *involving school children in environmental field work and maintenance projects;*
- *identifying the types of road use which increased the incidence of potholes and encouraging corresponding changes of behaviour in fleet operators and drivers.*

Streetscene – a possible future model (continued)

Complementing these are some possible changes to the way we work with Parish Councils and third sector groups, both large and small. These may include:

- *An expansion of the role of the Parish Stewards: doing, mediating (finding people, judging what best done by the council and what done by partner/community [see below]), or educating*
- *Local ownership of elements of Streetscene and/or volunteering.*
- *Local decision-making and Community Boards, including choices of cash or labour/value*
- *Board and council doing budgeting and priority-setting together, or communities electing to do some things from their local resources so that other things can be done by the council.*

Over time, these approaches in combination could be expected to have a significant impact on the Streetscene system, and contribute to both community engagement/decision-making and to increased social capital.

5.3 Service design

If agreed and implemented, a shift from predominantly reactive to predominantly proactive services acting on the system to address root causes of demand would have a significant impact on the services we offered. As a result, it is difficult to make specific proposals at this stage.

However, as described in section 3.6 above, beginning with the customer and putting ourselves in their shoes leads us to propose some theming for our service offers at the First Point of Contact.

These themed services would use demand and customer insight data to identify suitable service components from across the council's departments and, as the services became more mature, from our partners in the public and third sectors.

Three examples illustrate this:

- "Access to advice and support" service: eg access to benefits, housing advice, social care and debt advice, dealing with homophobic abuse or bullying. (This would build on the FOCUS programme to transform access to adult social care).
- "Moving in" service: eg council tax and voter registration, schools places, waste collections and recycling information, councillor information, transport and leisure information (?a Welcome Pack), as well as services for people with more particular needs eg Blue Badges, free school means, benefits/allowances etc.
- "Life Events: Births" eg information on child benefits, childminder and crèche, Homestart/support, health visitors and other people who can provide help, as well as registration of the birth. "Life Events: Deaths" offers similar possibilities for service design.

This service transformation can begin before 1 April 2009, in parallel with the work of transition. We propose to develop a First Point of Contact service covering benefits, housing advice, and (potentially) debt advice as a proof of concept, using customer focus and systems thinking, and developing it in parallel with the work going on in the FOCUS programme.

If the early results are encouraging, we propose to identify and develop other themed services.

5.4 Channels

Our future contact channels all depend on our future services design and – we believe – what are likely to be noticeably different demand patterns; any detail about these would be speculation at this stage. However, **face to face, telephone, web, email and paper** will all continue to be essential. In addition, **mobile working** for service delivery, **multi-agency/multi-purpose** channels, and the use of well tested digital channels eg **videolink, kiosks, digital TV, and SMS text messaging** will be used on a customer-driven basis.

5.5 Customer Focus and Access 2012: transformation – wider organisation elements

Delivering a transformed customer experience and access to services will require changes in our culture and behaviours, job and role design and specification, and information capture and use.

These are foundational enablers and we can and should begin work on them before 1 April 2009; they will bear increasing fruit over time.

- Capturing and making use of customer and community insight, and service demand data.
- Changing the workforce's mix of skills, knowledge and authority to match our service design and delivery.
- Changing roles, job descriptions and person specifications.
- Creating a consistent customer-focused culture and empowering leadership style across the organisation.
- Communication to staff and our citizens: to explain and to involve.

These bullets will be developed in more detail as we discuss the proposals above. However, we can only expect transformation if we take action on these – they affect the organisation's thinking, and therefore the performance of its system.

6. Next steps in the development of this Customer Access to Service Strategy

Project Initiation Document

This Strategy document does not describe in detail the projects and work parcels needed to implement the strategy. These will be contained in a Customer Focus, Access and Contact Project Initiation Document (PID), including estimated budget and other resources needed for stage 1 work (Section 4, particularly 4.8). The first draft PID will go to the CFB on 12 June.

Communication and awareness

Once the Customer Access to Service Strategy has been signed off, we will communicate it to a range of audiences; this communication will include:

- Summary of Access Channels at 1/4/09 – plainer English version, for customers
- Roadshows to all staff in the Customer Service functions (July)
- A members' seminar on Access to Services 2012 direction of travel.

John Rogers
Customer Focus Lead
9 June 2008

Appendix: customer demand data; geographic information; demographic and trend information

Commentary

Customer focus begins with understanding our communities' and citizens' needs and aspirations. This is achieved through engagement and dialogue, through research, and through analysis of social and customer data of many different kinds.

In brief: what are Wiltshire's communities like? What are our citizens and businesses like? What are they trying to become and how can we best help them? What are the principal barriers? Our services are interventions to close these gaps and overcome the barriers.

By combining and correlating our many sources of knowledge about our communities and customers, we can develop business intelligence: to prioritise services, to design, promote and deliver them in more effective ways, and to evaluate their effectiveness – the differences they have made to the individuals using them and the communities where they have been deployed.

A great deal of this information is already available to us. For example:

- Research, surveys, and community engagement.
- *People's Voice* and other panels.
- Demographic and social information including Mosaic.
- Indices of deprivation and hotspots.
- Population statistics.
- Transport route and customer journeys.
- Service taken up (or declined): the services and the outcomes, from line of business applications, from CRM data and in the heads of people delivering services.
- Detailed demand data and analysis by channel, location, and service.
- Complaints and reported service defects.
- Members, knowledge of their area and their constituents.
- Town and parish councils.
- National government statistics.
- Partner statistics and information, especially Police, Fire, Health, Probation, DWP, Learning and Skills Council, Chambers of Commerce, and third sector partners.

Turning this diverse data into business intelligence and making full use of it is a critical element of the customer focus enterprise; this work is being resourced and planned, and will shortly deliver demographic, demand and geographic information to service managers and other decision-makers.