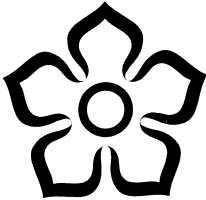


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Leicester
City Council

Information Services

CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY 2008 - 2011



One Council, One Contact

Prepared by: Jill Craig
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Quality Services

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Council's customers are the people in the community we serve: they are the people for whom we provide services. No matter who they are, all of our customers are entitled to a council that provides the highest level of customer care. And this is not a specialist function owned by one particular area. We are all – employee and councillor alike – part of making sure this happens.

Although focused primarily on access to council services via the telephone, personal visit or on-line, this strategy is much more than just a plan to improve customer access. It is part of a wider programme to improve the quality of life of all the people of Leicester and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK through action to improve economic, social and environmental well-being across the city. It is integral to the city's 25-year vision, which we are now working with our partners to deliver.

We must be customer-focused in everything we do from how we go about designing our services to the way we handle complaints. By involving customers in the design and delivery of services we can provide the services they want and need in their neighbourhoods. By valuing complaints we can learn and improve.

Our aim is for everyone who deals with the council to recognise that we did everything we could to help. We would like people to go away from the Council and say 'I thought they were really helpful'.....'they sorted out my problem' or 'they couldn't sort out my problem but they tried and they put me in touch with someone who could'.

At the heart of making this happen is to permit and support every member of staff to 'help', rather than to be constrained by ill conceived, perhaps unhelpful procedures. We want to challenge what we do now and improve any poor practices better and learn from the best. Our services must be designed and delivered with the customer in mind, not based on what is convenient to us.

We need to provide consistently high quality, customer-focused services. This will involve transferring first line customer contact for a wide range of services to dedicated, well trained, customer services staff.

In line with the government's transformational change plan, we will increasingly incorporate technologies that will improve efficiencies and make cost savings that can be re-invested in services for our customers.

We both fully endorse this strategy and support the ambitious *One Council, One Contact* work programme to transform the way our customers access council services.



Sheila Lock
The Interim Chief Executive



Ross Willmott
The Leader of the Council

2. A ONE COUNCIL APPROACH TO CUSTOMER SERVICE

2.1 Our vision

One Council, One Contact

2.2 Aim

Everyone who deals with the council will recognise that we did everything we could to help.

2.3 Objectives of the Customer Access Strategy 2008 - 2011

By 2011:

- 90% of residents will say they find Council staff helpful, 90% will say that its easy to get hold of the right person and 90% will say they find it easy to get hold of the information they need on the website
- 95% of all enquiries to Customer Services will be resolved in one click, one call or one visit
- Our customers will be able to access the same range of services whether they telephone, visit or use the internet
- Customers will have telephone access to our services 8am – 8pm, Monday - Saturday
- Where demand justifies we will provide customer service access points within one mile of every home in the City

2.4 Principles

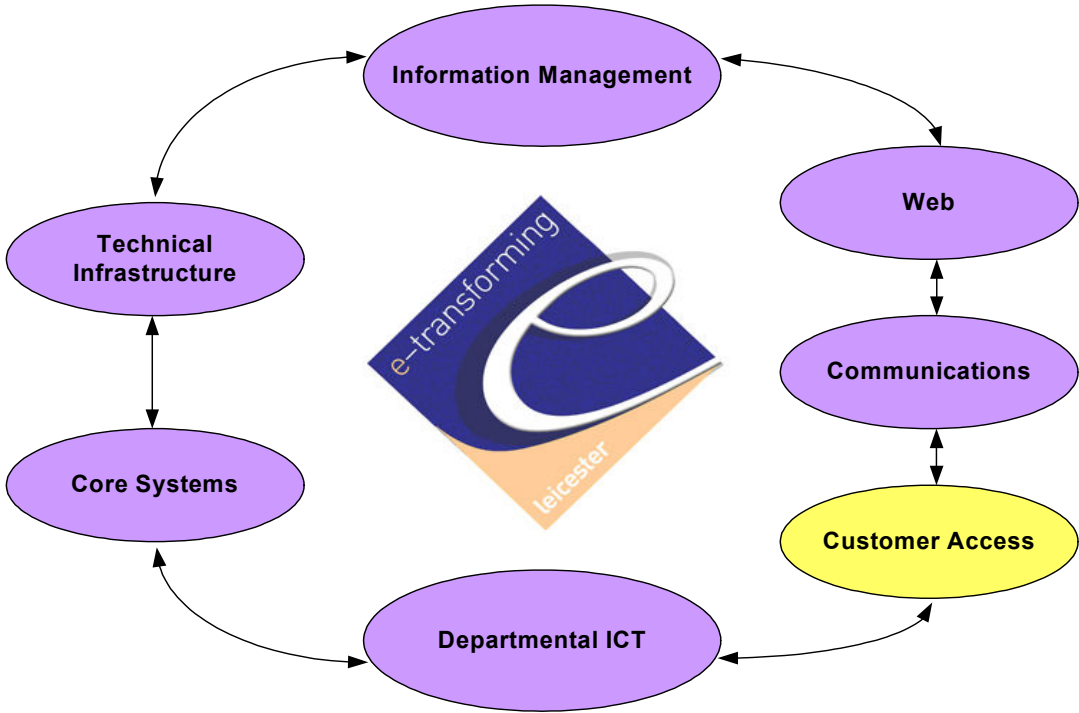
The following principles will underpin our planning and implementation:

- We will design and develop services around the needs of local people; these needs will be identified through research and consultation.
- Where opportunities allow, we will work in partnership with other agencies to provide joined up access to public services.
- Services will be delivered from a user perspective. The user should not need to know the organisational structure or internal processes of the Council in order to receive the service they require. Service provision should be seamless and as far as possible all requirements should be satisfied at the first point of contact.
- The solutions adopted will be financially realistic and sustainable.

- Service design will be compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).
- Delivery options will be designed to maximise social inclusion by adopting a “design for all” approach that ensures all citizens’ needs are met irrespective of age, gender, physical or financial ability, ethnic origin, race or religion.
- Full consideration will be given to the needs and protection of our more vulnerable services users, arrangements to secure their safety and well being will remain of paramount importance.

3. CONTEXT

This Customer Access Strategy is one of a family of strategies within the e-transforming Leicester Strategic Framework. This framework is about using information and communication technologies (ICT) to improve the way we work and to modernise the way we provide services to the public.



The Council’s existing Customer Access Strategy was agreed in 2005 and set targets for the period 2005 - 2012.

This document considers our achievements and disappointments since 2005 and sets an ambitious programme of activities to **deliver our vision one year ahead of our original timeframe.**

4. PROGRESS SINCE 2005, INCLUDING DISAPPOINTMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Performance data is detailed at Appendix A.

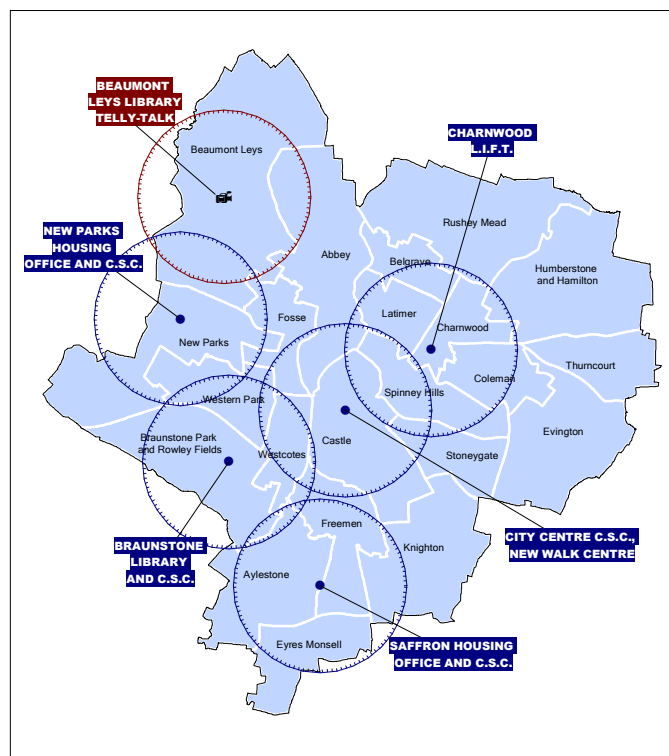
4.1 Face-to-face

The development of the council's first Customer Access Strategy in 2005 included extensive research to identify the areas that would most benefit from a face-to-face customer access point. The research looked at census data, deprivation statistics, transport links, access to cars and telephones, prevalence of community languages and high density social housing etc and concluded that there were five priority areas across the city that would benefit from assisted access to Council services: Charnwood; New Parks (opened 2003); Saffron; Beaumont Leys and Braunstone

During 2006 we opened neighbourhood Customer Service Centres (CSCs) in Saffron and Braunstone, one in partnership with Housing, the other in partnership with the Library Service.

In January 2008 we launched the Tellytalk service in Beaumont Leys, which allows service users to talk to a council customer services adviser by video link and to jointly complete transactions on line e.g. form filling etc. In February 2009 we will open a neighbourhood customer access point in Charnwood as part of the joint Health/ Social Care LIFT initiative. This will conclude our initial programme of work.

The map of Leicester below shows the location of City Council Customer Services access points as at January 2008. The circles illustrate a one-mile radius from each centre.



Other improvements since 2005 include:

Council Tax and Housing Benefits relocated to Wellington House. Housing Options merged with the Housing Advice Centre and relocated to Phoenix House. Both new receptions offer a much improved customer experience for service users.

In July 2007 the Council opened a newly refurbished reception in A block, staffed by Customer Services staff, which includes meeting and interview rooms. As well as offering a much more welcoming and appropriate front of house for visitors, the new arrangements have contributed to improved staff security in the building.

Customer Services expanded the range of services it offers including, for example, enquiries relating to the Licensing Act and to the decriminalisation of parking enforcement.

Customer Services continue to work with other agencies to provide seamless access to relevant services. Since 2005 this has included organising surgery sessions within the neighbourhood centres for Clockwise (Credit Union), WERAS (Welfare and Employment Rights Service), Braunstone Advice, Braunstone Working, Job Service Partnership, Connexions (advice on education, housing, money health and relationships for 13-19 year olds), Lone Parent Partnership and the Police.

4.2 Telephone (including text messaging)

In the Summer of 2005 the Home Office approached the council about a national initiative to introduce a Single Non-Emergency Number (SNEN) for non-emergency services. We were asked to bid in partnership with Leicestershire Constabulary and other Local Authorities within the Leicestershire Police boundary for moneys to pilot the service. The City Council led the bid and was successful in securing £4.2 million pounds to fund the service until December 2007 with the promise that funding would be extended until at least 2010. The new service, renamed 101, was launched in September 2006 and has been hugely successful. Unfortunately, we were advised on November 15th 2007 that there would be no further central funding of 101 beyond our existing funding agreement and the service was forced to close on December 7th. However the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland partnership has agreed to fund the continuation of an Inter Agency Community Safety Bureau which analyses data from all the partnership organisations to identify problem areas, look for trends etc in order to better understand, and therefore tackle, the causes of anti social behaviour.

In 2007 the council launched a 'text box' service which provides telephone access to deaf or hard of hearing customers.

Housing introduced telephone contact centres for Tenants Advice and Housing Options.

We are now making better use of the tools within the council's corporate call management system including call recording and intelligent messaging to refer callers to the council's internet for information on services out of hours and when queue lengths are long.

Automated telephone payments were introduced, which allow 24/7 self-service payments of invoices, parking fines, council tax bills etc.

Text messaging has been successfully adopted in a number of areas including STARTRAK, where users can subscribe to bus timetable details, and the Libraries Service where it has been used to promote events. Projects are in hand to further develop its use within the Library Service (notification of overdue books etc) and also within the Youth Offending Service. A project is underway to research best practice use of texting services. The findings will be used to promote the potential of this tool to improve services and save money.

We commissioned an independent review of the Council's telephone access arrangements the results of which have help shaped the development of this updated strategy.

4.3 Internet Access

The council web site goes from strength to strength. It was independently recognised during 2006 as one of the top ten local authority web sites and gained further national recognition during 2007 for the phenomenal success of the on-line recruitment system.

Over 100,000 different people use the council's main website every month and nearly 70% of these are Leicester citizens – representing two thirds of City households. New features and services added to the site since 2005 have been numerous but include:

- e-payments – allowing citizens to pay for services online
- redesign – increasing accessibility and usability
- e-forms covering about 100 services and linked to e-payments
- Google search engine
- Geographical information including City Streetz, My Nearest and more recently the traffic information website
- Information on over a 1,000 services
- Maintenance of over 75,000 URLs
- Online marketing activities such as Picasso website

4.4 Other

A cross-departmental group has continued to maintain and monitor the council's customer care standards. The standards were recently reviewed and were re-launched during December '07.

Customer Services are now handling in excess of 1,500 generic emails every month on the full range of services offered by the council.

The Customer Relationship Management tool (CRM) used across the whole of Customer Service is now also used by a number of 'back office' service areas in order for them to receive and respond to service requests. This facilitates speedier service response and also 'closes the loop' on an enquiry i.e. CSC staff can see when a task is still outstanding and when has been completed which helps provide a more joined up service to customers.

4.5 Disappointments/ Challenges

4.5.1 Face-to-face

Despite the introduction of two further Customer Service Centres taking the total to four, New Walk Centre CSC has seen no reduction in the number of customers being dealt with. This coupled with a general move towards enquiries being of a more in-depth nature has presented some challenges, in particular lengthy waits for service, although customer feedback remains positive (see Appendix B).

Visitor numbers at the BRITE CSC in Braunstone have been very disappointing despite the energetic promotional activities of the CSC staff including regular open days, involvement at the Braunstone Carnival, leaflet drops, visiting community centres etc.

Various plans to relocate the council's main CSC have been considered but a suitable alternative has not been identified. Some modernisation is being considered for 2008 so that the centre can accommodate the council's cash office, but a major refurbishment, to include merger with the Council Tax/ Housing Benefits front of house is not now expected until the future of New Walk Centre is resolved.

The physical limitations of the council's main Customer Service Centre has generated some criticism from customers, particularly those wishing to access planning applications (only limited space is currently available).

4.5.2 Telephone (including text messaging)

The council's corporate telephone contact centre, part of Information Services, includes the council's General Enquiries Line (0116 252 7000), the Corporate and Social Services' switchboards, as well as the StreetScene (0116 252 7001) and Waste Management (0116 252 7002) telephone lines. General enquiry staff are trained to handle the majority of first contact enquiries and should only need to transfer complex enquiries to the service professionals (the back office). For some time we have been trying to increase the size of the General Enquiries team by training the Waste Management and Streetscene staff but this is taking longer than anticipated as the small team gives little capacity to release staff for training.

Telephone call answering performance in Council Tax and Housing Benefits has been poor as the section has concentrated its resources in other areas. A self-help telephone service was piloted but discontinued following negative customer feedback.

4.5.3 Internet Access

Not all services are online, for example: housing benefits and council tax balance queries. Of those services that are on-line, many of them are not yet fully electronically integrated with back office systems which means that business processes are still not as efficient as they could be.

4.5.4 Other

MORI survey results indicate that our handling of complaints is worsening.

5. WHERE WE ARE NOW

The following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat (SWOT) analysis of the council's customer access arrangements (those within the scope of this strategy) has been compiled from discussions with key stakeholders and from user feedback.

Strengths

- S1 **Examples of excellence.** Professional, committed, highly regarded corporate Customer Services team able to handle the majority of customer enquiries at first point of contact
- S2 **Corporate standards.** Recently reviewed, well-publicised customer care standards.
- S3 **Choice of access.** Increasingly integrated web/ face-to-face and telephone access. Neighbourhood access points.
- S4 **Highly regarded web site.** 2/3rds of Leicester's households visit the council's web site each month.
- S5 **Recently established, enthusiastic complaints group.** Some funding for 2008/9 to improve complaints handling and clarity of responsibility for corporate complaints. All department support to develop a single corporate ICT complaints system.

Weaknesses

- W1 **Telephone access.** Over 380 different phone numbers advertised in the council's A-Z of services. Performance information is available for only 60% of these numbers. Available data indicates that 33% of telephone calls to the council go unanswered.
- W2 **Opening hours.** The council's general enquiry services are only available during core office hours despite customer feedback that they would prefer us to be open into the evening and on Saturdays.
- W3 **Not fully transactional.** The council's web site is not yet fully transactional. Many e-requests for services are still processed manually.
- W4 **Inaccurate data.** There is not a single source of accurate staff information within the council making the provision of an effective switchboard service difficult.
- W5 **Pockets of poor performance.** Council Tax/ Housing Benefits telephone performance is poor. Corporately we have a poor record on non-statutory complaints management and arrangements to manage and monitor e-mail requests for service are inadequate.
- W6 **Small Customer Service teams.** Limited resilience and no capacity to release staff for staff development. No training resource.
- W7 **Customer Services accommodation** leaves no space for additional services and limits our potential to develop more partnership working with other agencies e.g. on-site surgeries.
- W8 **Limited knowledge of hard to reach groups.**
- W9 **Very limited closing the loop** on calls to ensure that services have been delivered as promised.
- W10 **Process inefficiencies** – For example limited system integration means that data is keyed multiple times.

- W11 **Not joined up.** Departmental customer initiatives are not always joined up
W12 **Customer profile data out of date.**
W13 **Low visitor numbers** at the BRITE Centre.
W14 **Customer Services do not provide a holistic service** for all departments for example they provide limited front of house services for CYPS and Adults with the majority of enquiries being signposted onwards.

Opportunities

- O1 Potential to relocate the Customer Services Centre to a more central location.
O2 The 2008/11 budget strategy includes considerable revenue funding to improve both customer access to the City Council and internal business efficiencies.
O3 Use of the Internet expected to increase – we need to exploit its potential to facilitate 24/7 self-help access to council services.
O4 Greater integration between the CRM and back office systems to limit re-keying and to offer an enhanced end-to-end service.

Threats

- T1 Departmental reluctance to change the way they operate .
T2 Customer Services are not always involved in service planning even when it affects them.

The work programme detailed in Appendix B seeks to address the weaknesses, build on the strengths and exploit the opportunities whilst being mindful of the threats. The threats are considered in the following table.

Threat	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions	Lead
T1	High	High	Political endorsement of this strategy Unambiguous and on-going support from the Chief Executive and Directors' Board A robustly managed and properly resourced project which includes capacity to support departmental change e.g. appointment of some business analysis resource to work with departments and Customer Services to demonstrate how end to end processes can be improved to everyone's benefit	Cabinet The Chief Executive Service Director (Information)
T2	High	High	Appoint a liaison officer within customer services to work closely with services. An on-going and active 'Customer First' awareness campaign to promote the role of Customer Services and how they can help. The Leader and the Chief Exec should have a high profile on this.	Head of Customer Services Communications Officer (Projects)

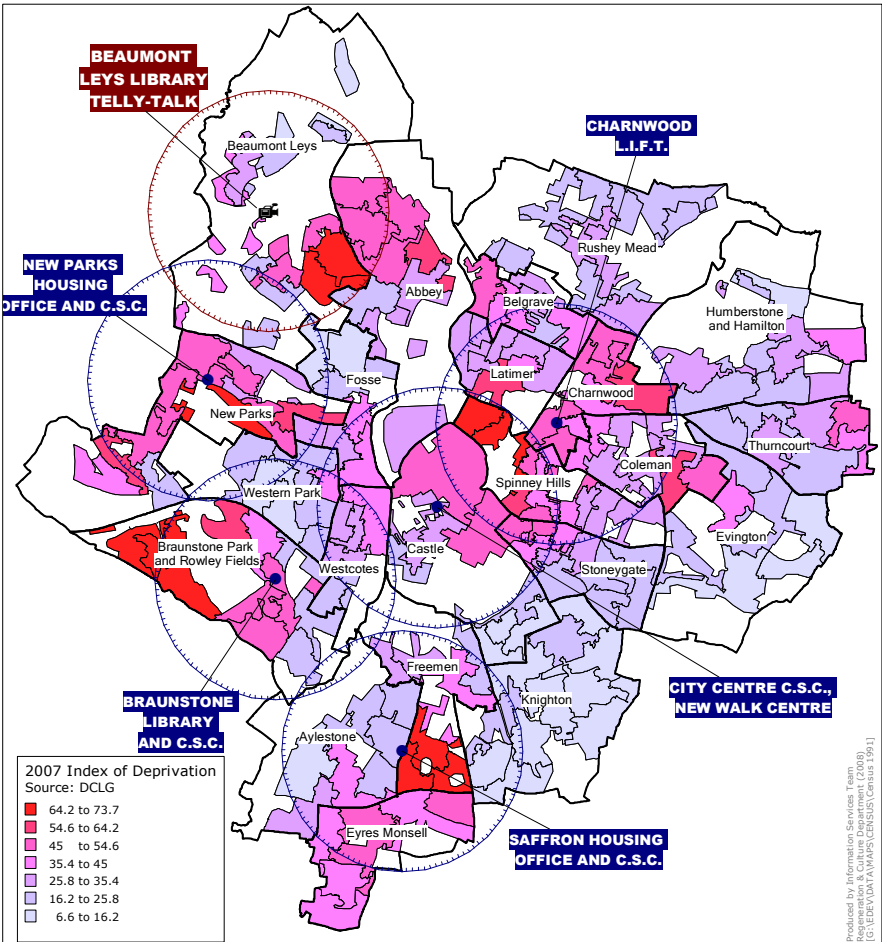
6. PRIORITIES FOR 2008 – 2009

See Appendix B for the action plan.

6.1 Do our priorities reflect what our customers want

We carry out our own regular customer surveys to understand preferred access channels and to get feedback on existing arrangements. We also closely monitor best practice in other councils and within the private sector, where relevant, and are members of National Customer Service Benchmarking Groups. We make use of the people’s panel in our research and make appropriate changes to services as a result of comments, compliments and complaints received.

Section 3.1 described a piece of work carried out in 2005 to shape our Customer Access Strategy, in particular our plans for neighbourhood customer access points. Our analysis at that time was based on the 1998 census of deprivation statistics. The 2007 data (below) is now available to us and shows a marked difference in the profile of the city.



The overlay of our existing neighbourhood Customer Access Points shows that we need to refresh our analysis and explore where community needs are not being met. Furthermore we need to recognise that a Customer Access Point within a mile may be insufficient in particular parts of the city due to the existing public transport infrastructure and the actual terrain.

We don't anticipate any further neighbourhood Customer Service Centres, unless as part of a wider review of council premises and of joint public sector service delivery in local communities. Instead we will seek to meet our objective of [where demand justifies] a City Council Customer Access point within 1 mile of every home in the City through greater use of Tellytalk (subject to a successful pilot), mobile Customer Services and/or surgery based services in council and non-council owned premises.

Working closely with our colleagues in Property Services we will engage with members to understand issues within their own wards and during 2008/9 staff from Customer Services will attend all the ward community meetings to consult residents on customer access arrangements in their area.

6.2 Face-to-face

Subject to funding we will explore the best solutions to respond to our analysis of community access needs (section 6.1).

In addition:

We will respond to customer feedback that they would welcome the New Walk Centre Customer Services Centre opening for longer hours by extending opening hours to 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday and also opening on Saturday mornings (initially on a trial basis).

We will continue to explore how we can increase visitor numbers to the BRITE centre. We will improve external signage at the centre so that passers by are aware that the centre includes a CSC and what services the CSC offers.

We will prepare for the opening of a fourth neighbourhood CSC in the Charnwood ward as part of the joint Social Services/ Health Authority LIFT scheme. Opening scheduled for early 2009.

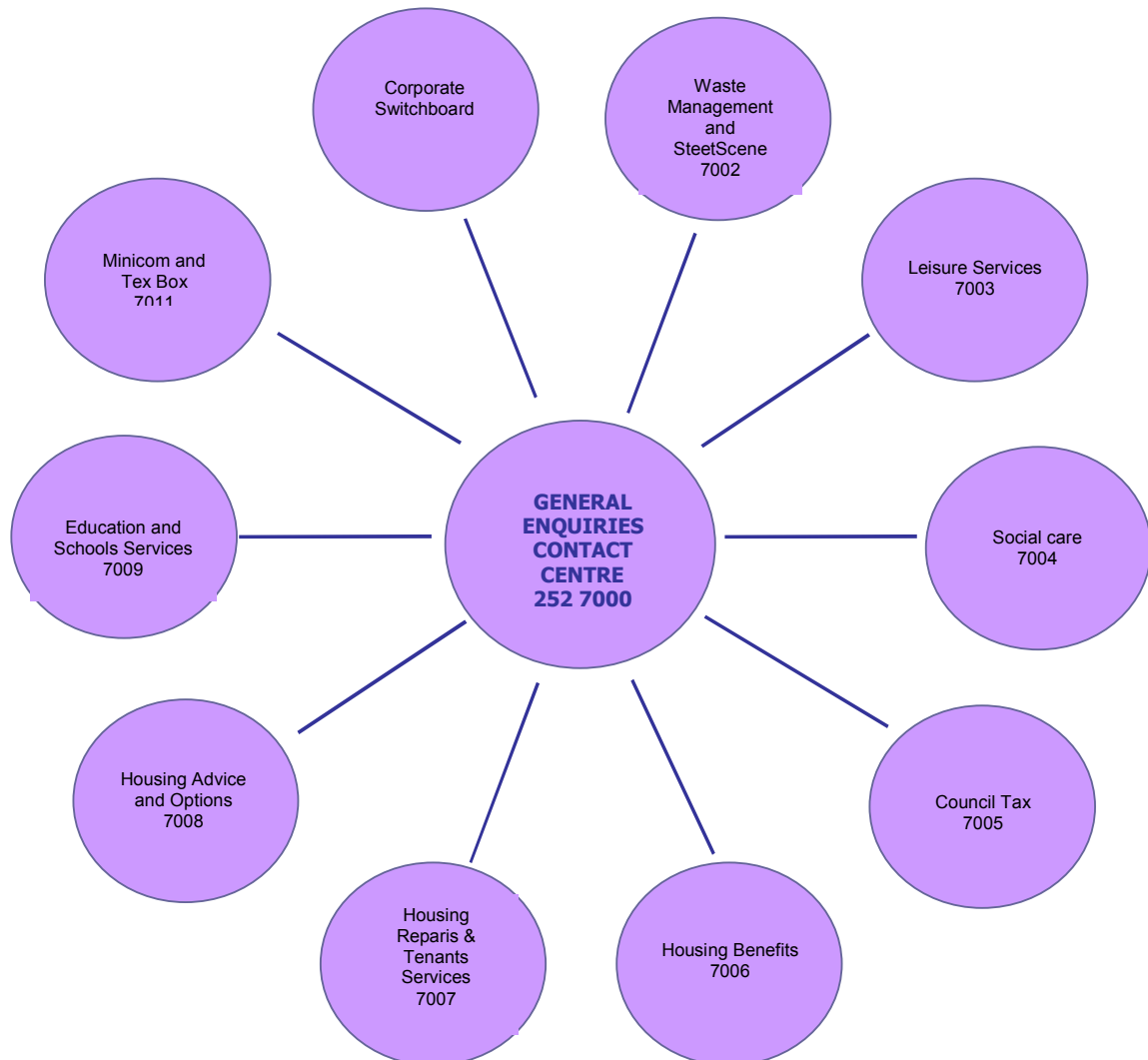
We will re-model of the NWC Customer Service Centre, to include the council's cash office (to facilitate the closure of Welford House).

Recognising that a skilled and well informed employee, working in a neighbourhood, can be a very effective customer access point, we will consider giving front line staff a pocket book with simple guidance and key council numbers in so that they could give members of the public the right phone number if they had a complaint about any of the key services.

6.3 Telephone (including text messaging)

An independent review of the council's telephone access carried out during 2007 highlighted significant shortcomings with the then existing arrangements. The review recommended the directory structure illustrated in the following diagram. Consultation with the council's People's Panel endorsed the recommendations.

Diagram one: The council's telephone directory structure in 2011



We aim to implement these new arrangements by 2011 in order to provide a simpler less confusing, more holistic service to our users. Customers will benefit from easier access to the council as a result of a less complex telephone number choice. These new arrangements will build on the existing contact centres: Housing Reparis and Tenants Services and Housing Advice and Options will be managed by Housing contact centres and all other calls will be managed by the Corporate Contact Centre. There may be a small range of services that the council may choose to remain outside of telephone number consolidation – each case will be looked at on its own merits: the presumption however will be towards consolidation and initial contact being managed by Contact Centre staff.

In addition we will:-

Respond to customer feedback and extend the opening hours of the general enquiries telephone service to 8am – 8pm, Monday – Saturday.

Tackle call management performance in currently underperforming areas.

Promote the use of text messaging as a tool to improve services and reduce costs.

Introduce automated routing on certain telephone services to facilitate 24/7 access e.g. facilities to leave change of address detail messages.

Introduce more self-help tools to reduce the usage of the switchboard by council staff to release capacity to provide a better public service.

6.4 Internet Access

www.leicester.gov.uk will include a citizen portal that will facilitate integrated online access to the full range of services available via the council's customer service centres.

We will develop a secure solution to facilitate financial and/or confidential transactions with the council e.g. council tax payments.

We will integrate the web site with CRM and back office applications/systems.

6.5 Other

We will work closely with departmental Heads of ICT and departmental services in order to fundamentally challenge the relationship between the front of house and the back office to ensure that we are collectively providing the best service to the customer and that our processes are efficient and effective.

We will establish a cross department project to improve customer satisfaction with the council's handling of complaints and establish arrangements to evidence how we have used complaints to improve service.

The CRM database holds a wealth of information. Customer Services will help departments better understand their users, and the types of enquiries they raise, by starting to routinely supply enquiry statistics.

We will organise an active, and on-going, campaign to promote the council's different access channels 'Customer Services @ Leicester'. The campaign will be targeted to reflect any lessons learned from the analysis of existing enquiry data.

We will review existing, and where necessary establish new, performance indicators to measure performance and ensure that the data is readily available both to staff and service users.

We will continue to benchmark our performance against other local authorities and continue to research and learn from best practice.

7. WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

General

- We will be recognised as a council that puts the customer first.
- Trust and confidence in the council will have improved.
- Greater satisfaction with the accessibility of council services (opening hours and ease of contacting someone able to help).
- System integration between front of house and back office systems will increase service efficiency and effectiveness and release tangible financial savings.

Telephone

- We will see an on-going improvement in call management performance.
- Telephone access to the Council will be via a less complex telephone number choice.
- More calls will be resolved on the first point of contact by highly trained contact centre staff.
- There will be a reduction in call volume to back office specialists, allowing them to concentrate on complex tasks.

Face-to-face

- Increasing numbers of face-to-face contacts.

Internet

- More services will be e-enabled to facilitate 24/7 access to our services. The Internet will become the access channel of choice for increasing numbers of our service users.
- Increasing numbers of services will be available for end to end processing through the website
- We will be able to evidence financial savings from the shift away from traditional forms of contact to web contact.

Complaints

- Customer satisfaction with our complaints handling will improve.
- The numbers of complaints, compliments and comments received by the council will increase as the public recognise the value of telling us how they feel.
- Examples of where complaints have led to service improvements will regularly feature in council publications.
- All complaints will be administered via a single corporate system with performance data electronically supplied to the council's PerformancePlus performance management system.

8. GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Service Director responsible for Customer Access is Jill Craig, Service Director (Information).

The Cabinet lead for Customer Access is Mary Draycott.

Implementation of this strategy and the complementary Web Strategy will be managed as a PRINCE II project with a full time project manager.

All project documentation will be accessible on the council's Intranet at //insite/e-transformingLeicester

Key stakeholder groups include Cabinet, Directors' Board, the Council's Strategic Resources Group, Heads of ICT, the Council's Complaints Group and the Council's Customer Care Group and Neighbourhood Managers.

The strategy will be reviewed annually.

Performance data

TELEPHONE (Main advertised numbers only)

Service area No. of calls offered (%. of calls abandoned)	Monthly average 2005/06	Monthly average 2006/07	Monthly average 2007/08 (Apr – Jan)
General Enquiries Line	4948 (7%)	6503 (8%)	7710 (10%)
Streetscene	4444 (11%)	3978 (16%)	3224 (10%)
Waste Management Line	5192 (5%)	6423 (11%)	6272 (11%)
Job Shop	n/a	1618 (n/a)	2190 (n/a)
Switchboard	30462 (3%)	31099 (2%)	30519 (11%)
Social Services (switchboard only)	11784 (0)	10925 (0)	10936 (7%)
Council Tax	Not available	12572 (55%)	8619 (52%)
Housing Benefits	Not available	Not available	6174 (40%)
Housing Repairs	158181 (n/a)	168623 (n/a)	95699 (n/a)
Housing Advice and Options	Not available	4292 (20%)	4663 (26%)
Housing Tenants Advice Line	Not available	5385 (10%)	5479 (10%)
Education and School Services (no single telephone entry point as at February 2008)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Leisure Services (no single telephone entry point as at February 2008)	N/A	N/A	N/A

WEB

	Jan 2006	Jan 2008
Unique users per month (according to Nielsen Netratings)	97,374	112,638
Visits to the site (1)	3,084,498	3,524,455
Pages viewed (2)	32,107,584	41,856,941
% of users satisfied with the site (3)	69%	69%
% of Leicester's population using the site	16%	25.7%
Value of online payments (5)	£3,303,655.22	£5,139,173.75

- (1) Visits to the site is calculated by measuring the number of times a computer connects to our web server.
- (2) Pages viewed is a count of the number of pages served by our main www.leicester.gov.uk web server - excluding page views for job shop, cabinet papers and other council sites hosted on different servers.
- (3) Online survey feedback. The survey also asks why people are not satisfied with the site and an often-sited reason is the unavailability of transactions or the inability to find information they think we should provide. Benchmark figures for Unitary councils participating in the SOCITM website take up service are in brackets.
- (4) This figure is calculated as follows: 112,638 unique visited with website in Jan 07, 63.86% said they were from Leicester in our survey. Therefore, 71,959 residents used the site which would represent 25.7% of the population of 280,000 or 65.4% of the 110,000 households in Leicester.
- (5) Online payment is a total of the value of payments processed using the online payments website. It does not include online payments for DeMontfort Hall.

COMPLAINTS

Best value satisfaction measures

PI	Actual 2003/4	Target 2006/7	Actual 2006/07
BV0004 satisfaction complaint handling	34.00	40.00	30.00

Complaints referred to the Ombudsman

	04/05	05/06	06/07
No maladministration	44 (30%)	48 (41%)	21 (18%)
Local Settlement	34 (23%)	28 (24%)	9 (7%)
Outside Jurisdiction	11 (7%)	11 (9%)	15 (13%)
Ombudsman's Discretion	9 (6%)	6 (5%)	12 (10%)
Premature	45 (31%)	24 (21%)	61 (51%)
Discontinued/Withdrawn	0	0	0
Maladministration found	4 (3%)	0	1 (1%)
Total (less premature complaints)	102	93	58

OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH ACCESSING COUNCIL SERVICES

Now thinking about the Council service you contacted most recently...

And when you last contacted the Council, did you find staff ?

		1998 %	2001 %	2005 %
Q1.	Helpful	70	69	70
	or Unhelpful	24	22	23
	Neither/don't know	6	6	5

BASE: All who have contacted the Council: 1998 (765); 2001 (826); 2005 (855)

Was getting hold of the right person ?

		1998 %	2001 %	2005 %
	Easy	59	60	56
	or Difficult	33	33	37
	Neither/don't know	8	5	4

BASE: All who have contacted the Council: 1998 (765); 2001 (826); 2005 (855)

You said that you have visited the council web-site. Thinking of the last time you visited the council web-site, how easy or difficult was it to find the information you were looking for?

	%
Very easy	14
Fairly easy	49
Fairly difficult	18
Very difficult	3
Don't know	1

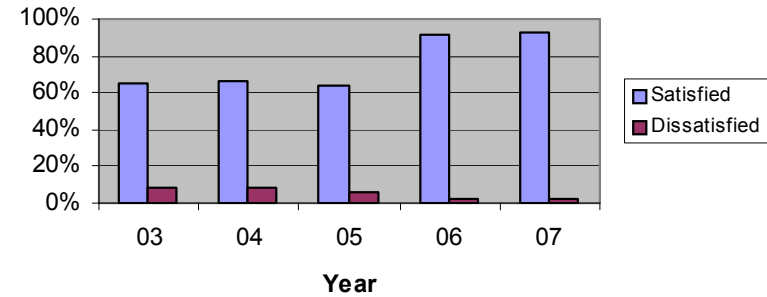
BASE: All who have used the Council Web-site (129)

FACE TO FACE

Visitor numbers to the Council's Customer Service Centres

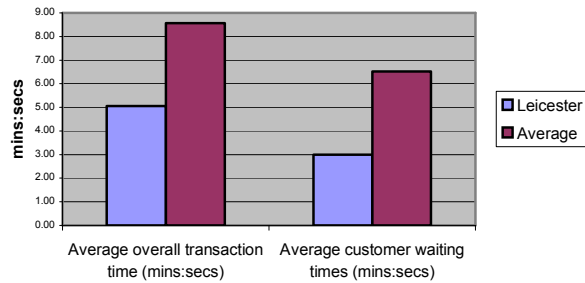
	2005	2006	2007 (Apr – Oct)
A Block Reception	28369	28422	11496
New Walk Centre	55797	75975	46448
New Parks	17781	20159	13041
Saffron (Sept 05)	7455	13629	8811
Brite (Jan 06)	2421	8497	4576
All Centres	113828	148688	84372 (7 months)

Annual Customer Services Survey (results averaged across all CSCs)

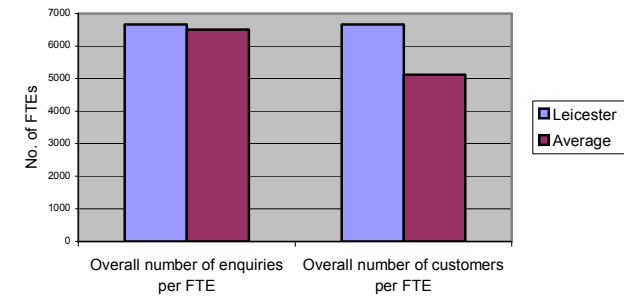


National Customer Service Benchmarking Survey Results

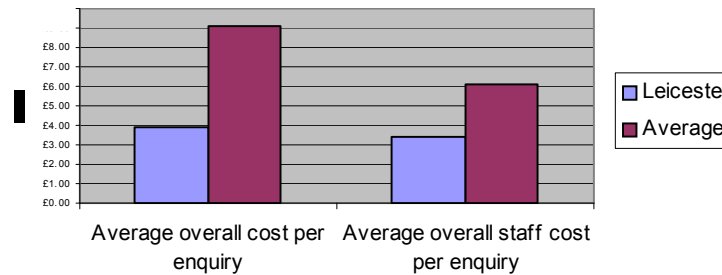
Average waiting times



Overall enquiries per FTE



Average overall cost per enquiry – Leicester compared with other unitary and county authorities



Appendix B

Customer Access Strategy Work Programme 2007 – March 2009

FACE-TO-FACE

	SWOT ref	Projects	Lead(s)	Outputs	Outcomes	Milestone actions and target dates	Resourcing
F1	S3, W8, W12, O2	Working with Property Services consult with Members, Neighbourhood Managers and Communities via community meetings to better understand neighbourhood Customer Access requirements	Rachael Dewiss	Improved knowledge of our customer profile. More targeted improvement programme.	Improved Customer Satisfaction/improved access to services	Agree a programme of consultation by April 2008	Budget for two further Telly talk sites, including accommodation changes, in 2008/9 £80k. Ring £200k from 2009/10 to deliver further localised services.
F2	S1, S3, W2, W6, O2,	Pilot extended opening hours of NWC from 8am - 6pm Mon-Fri and 9.30 – 12.30 Saturday morning	Pat Jones	Increased staffing levels within the team. Extend opening hours	Improved Customer Satisfaction/improved access to services	TBA	Approx £50k per year
F3	S1, W6, O2	Recruit a person to meet and greet visitors to NWC to help manage the queues.	Tina Skerritt	Improved Service. Less queuing.	Improved Customer Satisfaction/improved access to services	Advertise May Interview June Recruit July	£25k (full year cost) from 2008/9
F4	S1, S3, W2, W6, O2,	Interactive video conferencing pilot	Melinda Buckby	Extend access to “face to face” services to more areas of the City. Better understanding of the potential of Tellytalk to contribute to F1.	Improved access to/take up of services	Launch Jan 08 Review May 08	Additional staff member. Moneys included in budget from 2007/8.

F5	S1, S3, W2, W6, O2,	Open the Charnwood LIFT CSC (our fourth neighbourhood CSC)	Pat Jones	Increase access points to council services in more areas of the City.	Improved access to services / Improved partnership working	New Centre Open Jan/Feb 2009	£155,000 running costs. £130,000 included in budgets from 2007/8. (£25,000 shortfall to be met from growth in 2008/9)
F6	S1, S2, W6, W7, O1	Refurbish NWC CSC to include the Council's central cash desk or move to a more centrally located CSC	Pat Jones	Improve customer and staff accommodation and facilities. Release Welford House.	Improved Customer Satisfaction/improved access to services	Refurbished accommodation open March 2008	Not yet known. Part of CLABs budget.
F7	S1, S3	Play an active part in the evolving neighbourhood access strategy	Pat Jones	Contribution to evolving plans in respect of public access to services,	Improved customer satisfaction/ Improved access to services.	On-going	TBA
F8	W13	Improve take up at the Brite Centre	Pat Jones	Improved signage	Increased visitor numbers	April 2008	£5k

TELEPHONE

	SWOT ref	Projects	Lead(s)	Outputs	Outcomes	Milestone actions and target dates	Resourcing
T1	W2, S3	Extend opening hours of the Service Lines to 8-8, 6 days a week plus recruit some initial additional capacity to expand the service to deliver T2 (below)	Pat Jones	Increased staffing levels within the team. Scope to increase range of services handled by the team. Extend opening hours	Improved Customer Satisfaction/improved access to services	Complete staff review May 2008 Recruit new staff by September 2008 Train new staff by December 2008 Launch new service January 2009	£160,000 telephone call handling staff for 2008/9. Will increase year on year thereafter as a wider range of services are taken on. Technology costs to support extended hours and a wider range of services i.e. T4, T5 and T6 £60k

T2	S2, W1	Review corporate telephone access arrangements to reduce the range of advertised numbers by transferring first line contact to Customer Services	Melinda Buckby	Agree a work programme in consultation with Heads of ICT and departmental DMTs Reduce range of advertised numbers.	Improve call handling performance. Improved Customer Satisfaction.	Agree work programme by 1 st May	Costs to be included in T1 (it is assumed that existing dedicated resource will transfer)
T3	W1, W5, W6	Phased approach to transferring Council Tax/ Housing Benefit first line contact to Customer Services (CT/HB will continue to handle complex enquiries)	Nicola Newman	Council Tax/ Housing Benefit calls will be handled by dedicated Customer Services call handling staff. Complex enquiries will be transferred to a specialist team.	Improved performance – improved customer satisfaction.	Progress dependent of recruiting to vacant posts in the Customer Service Line. Phase 1 – transfer change of address calls (28% of all calls) Phase 2 – transfer other less complex enquiry types (78% of all calls)	Costs to be included in T1 (it is assumed that existing dedicated resource will transfer)
T4	W1, W5, W6	Pilot use of voice and interactive telephony e.g. for pre-recorded messages to inform callers of opening times (this will be subject to the adoption of rigorous procedures to keep the information up to date – see OT1)	Melinda Buckby	Improve call handling performance	Improved customer satisfaction. More efficient use of resources.	Specification for use of Interactive agents. Dec 07. Use of voice directed facilities Jan 08.	See T1
T5		Research potential of text messaging and	Steve Scott	Report.	Widespread understanding of the potential use of text	Research to be completed by end May 2008.	Internal resource only

		promote.			messaging to improve services and reduce costs.		
T6		Introduce voice recognition technology (orator) to handle calls to the authority asking for named officers	Melinda Buckby	More efficient switchboard service Release resource for general enquiries	Improved customer satisfaction	TBA	See T1

INTERNET (See the Web Strategy for more details)

Ref	SWOT ref	Project	Lead(s)	Outputs	Outcomes	Milestone actions and target dates	Resources
I1		Online Customer Service Centre	Steve Scott	Personalised web page that will be a focus for online customer service Improved access to information Personalised services	Improved customer service More efficient use of resources. Reduced phone calls	Launch KTP partnership	£30,000 (in 08/09) £30,000 (in 09/10)
						Research into the provision of online authentication – June 08	Internal resource
						Develop online registration linked to the Customer Relationship Management System and other web systems Jan 09	KTP + internal resource
						portal page goes live April 09	KTP + internal resource
						Web users can register online April 09	

						3 rd party Security Audit of website and online services – Oct 08	£20,000
I2	W3, O4	Integration of back office systems	Steve Scott	<p>Improved use of the CRM system and facilities. Extended use of CRM by other council services.</p> <p>Will save Customer Service Staff from re-keying information</p> <p>Customer Services Staff will not need to use multiple systems to deal with calls</p> <p>Customers will not need to provide the same information repeatedly</p> <p>Relieve back office staff from dealing with basic enquiries</p> <p>Customers calls will be dealt with in a timely manner</p>	Improved customer service More efficient use of resources.	Procure Middleware	£25,000
						Recruitment of staff to implement integrated services and help services improve their business processes – July 08	£80,000 (in 08/09) £120,000 (in 09/10)
						Prioritisation of services June 08	Internal resources
						identity management to facilitate integration and provision of online accounts	£50,000 per year
						data cleansing	£20,000
I3	O3	The provision of comprehensive, up-to-date and accurate information on the website		Reduced phone calls and walk in enquiries	Improved customer service More efficient use of resources.	Recruit Editor to improve the information provided on the site and run training workshops for site editors	£20,000 (in 08/09)
						Audit the site for Accessibility, usability and completeness of	

						information	
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GENERAL

	SWOT ref	Projects	Lead(s)	Outputs	Outcomes	Milestone actions and target dates	Resourcing
OT1	All	Appoint a project manager for two years to oversee implementation of this strategy	Jill Craig	Capacity to manage the project.	The project objectives met.	Recruit a PM by June 2008	£50k per year
OT2	All	Work with City Learning to promote a 'How can we help?' initiative through training, promotions, best practice competitions etc.	Rachael Dewis	Consideration of a Best Practice award. Training events for front line staff. Coverage in FACE, insite etc.	A customer focused culture. More confident staff equipped to respond positively to all enquiries.	TBA	TBA
OT3	W6, W9, W11	Recruit a Customer Services liaison officer responsible for liaison with back offices to report any change of circumstances and for informing/ training the staff in these changes.	Pat Jones	Stronger back office/ front office relations. Fewer surprises. More accurate information held by Customer Services will in turn ensure better quality/ more accurate advice to our customers.	Improved satisfaction with the council.	Advertise May Interview June Recruit July/Aug	£25k per year from 2008/9.
OT4	W5	Recruit a Complaints Manager		On hold	On Hold	On hold	Separate budget agreed for 2008/9 only.
OT5	W5	Project to raise the profile of the council's complaints processes.	TBA	Updated procedure. Internal publicity programme to raise awareness of the importance of complaints management and everyone's role.	Improved satisfaction with the council.	Review of complaints procedure June 08. Re-launch of procedure Sept 08 Publicity Sept 08	TBA

OT6	W5	Develop and implement a corporate complaints and members enquiries system	Ian Colledge	A system, with document storage and workflow, that is used across the entire council and facilities, amongst other things, cross departmental unified responses.	Improved satisfaction. Fewer ombudsman complaints.	October 2008	TBA
OT7		Produce – ‘who to contact’ card for all front line staff	Rachael Dewis	Cards available for front line staff with information signposting members of the public to customer services			
OT8	W8, W12	Knowing our customers – the routine provision of usage information for services.	Melinda Buckby	Customer Survey results. Customer intelligence from CRM System	More focused service delivery. Reduced costs.	Mystery shopping exercise spring 08. Regular customer satisfaction surveys.	£10,000 per year from 2008/9 (across all access channels)
OT9	S3	Raise the profile of the council’s Customer Access arrangements	Rachael Dewis	Communications Action Plan	Improved/increased awareness of Customer Services and its role	On-going	£50,000 for 2008/9 including a contribution to a new A-Z of services to advertise new opening hours
OT10	W3, W9, W10	Strategic review of the Council’s CRM system to include project to integrate the CRM with key back office systems	Pat Jones	Improved use of the CRM system and facilities. Extended use of CRM by other council services.	More efficient use of resources. Improved customer satisfaction.	Review meeting with action plan Dec 07.	Overall budgetary commitment for 2008/9 £100,000
OT11	W6	Introduce a workforce management tool	Melinda Buckby	Reduction in time taken to devise staff rota’s Improved performance against SLA targets.	More efficient use of resources. Improved customer satisfaction.	TBA	Estimated £25,000 in 2008/9 and £3,000 per year thereafter
OT12	W3, W9, W10, W11	Implement an on-line booking system (this is a pre-requisite to Customer Services being	Simon Bennett	Web based tool to book services, fully integrated with back office systems to avoid re-keying. The public will be able to use the tool as will Customer Services	Increased revenue to the council. Improved customer satisfaction.	TBA	Estimated £50,000

		able to handle Leisure Service calls)		staff.			
OT13	W5, W8	Review arrangements for monitoring LCC Customer Access performance – the PIs to be meaningful to staff, members and the public and capable of comparison with other agencies.	Jill Craig	An agreed set of performance measures. Results fully integrated into PerformancePlus as appropriate.	Better targeted investments.	Agreed measure for complaints mgt by June 2008 Others by August 2008	Existing resource
OT14	W10, W11	Maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of the business processes between front of house and the back office	Pat Jones and business managers	Improved service delivery. Reduced costs.	Improved services – greater customer satisfaction.	Programme TBA	Business analysis resource. £35k per year for two years

Appendix C

One Council, One Contact

Note: These costs are best estimate as at March 2008.

	2008/9 Revenue £'000s	2009/10 Revenue £'000s	2010/11 Revenue £'000s
Web			
Personalised web pages	30	30	
Independent security audit	20	20	20
Middleware to facilitate system integration	25		
Web development staff	80	120	120
Identify mgt software for user authentication		50	50
Data cleansing	20	20	20
Web Editor to maintain access information on web site	20	30	30
Face to face			
Tellytalk/ Neighbourhood access	80	150	200
Pilot extended opening hours in the NWC CSC	30	50	50
Meet and greet officer for NWC	25	25	25
Charnwood CSC - additional running costs		25	25
Improved signage at the Braunstone Brite Centre	5		
Telephone			
Extended opening hours plus wider range of services	130	220	300
Upgrading telephony IT system	60	15	15
Other			
Project Management Resource	50	50	
Back office liaison/ staff development	45	45	45
Complaints IT system	40	5	5
Customer survey	10	10	10
Communications	50	50	50
System integration	100	100	70
Workforce scheduling tool	25	3	3
On line booking system	50	10	10
Business Analysis Resource	35	35	35
Total	930	1063	1083

Appendix D

One Council, One Contact – Milestones

1. **By April 2009:**

- 95% of all enquiries to Customer Services will be resolved in one click, one call or one visit. (1)
- 75% (currently 70%) of residents will say they find Council staff helpful, 75% (currently 56%) will say that its easy to get hold of the right person and 75% (currently 63%) will say they find it easy to get hold of the information they need on the website. (2)
- Customer's will be able to phone the council and talk to a Customer Services Officer 8am – 8pm, Monday – Saturday. 95% of all calls will be answered (currently 90%).
- We will have seen a quantifiable improvement in the Council Tax/ Housing Benefits telephone call handling performance. 70% of all calls will be answered (currently 50%).
- We will have strengthened the council's comments, compliments and complaints management system. Roles and responsibilities will be clear and we will have in place a single corporate complaints system recording all non-statutory complaints.
- The numbers of complaints, compliments and comments received by the council will increase as the public recognise the value of telling us how they feel. A greater percentage of complaints will get resolved at the first stage in the council's two stage complaints process i.e. the complainant won't feel the need to escalate the complaint.
- Services will be able to demonstrate tangible examples of service improvement as a result of complaints or comments. These examples will regularly feature in internal and external council publications. All complaints will be administered via a single corporate system with performance data electronically supplied to the council's Performance Plus performance management system.

In addition:

- We will have opened a Customer Service Centre in Charnwood as part of the LIFT initiative.
- We will have completed a pilot of extended opening hours in the NWC CSC. If the public demand justifies extending the hours, permanent operating arrangements will have been put in place.

- Customer information on Leicester.gov.uk will be more complete and robust processes will exist to keep it up to date.

Communications activities - external

- A 'We want to hear from you' campaign to encourage Leicester visitors and citizens to tell us what they think of us will be established in LINK and a programme of work will be in place to further raise its profile.
- There will be a high profile campaign to promote Customer Services, in particular the extended telephone opening hours and the neighbourhood CSCs.

Communications activities - internal

- Awareness of the One Council, One Contact initiative will be widespread. An internal 'How can we help?' initiative will be well established. This will include consideration of a Best Practice award, training events for front line staff etc.
- An internal Think Web! Campaign to emphasise the importance of the web in service provision will have concluded. Web editor roles will have been formally established and quality standards good.

2. By April 2010 we will have:

- 95% of all enquiries to Customer Services will be resolved in one click, one call or one visit.
- 80% of residents will say they find Council staff helpful, 80% will say that its easy to get hold of the right person and 80% will say they find it easy to get hold of the information they need on the website.
- We will have seen a further quantifiable improvement in the Council Tax/ Housing Benefits telephone call handling performance. At least 80% of all calls will be answered.
- Customers will be able to register on-line for a range of council services. Their web page will be personalised to reflect their particular interests.
- There will be an integrated on-line booking system allowing customers to book any council service on line.
- Customer Services will advertise SMS as an alternative way of contacting the council.
- The majority of telephone accessible services across Resources, R&C and Housing will be centralised within the corporate or Housing call centres. 'Old' numbers will no longer be advertised.

3. April 2011

- 95% of all enquiries to Customer Services will be resolved in one click, one call or one visit.
- 90% of residents will say they find Council staff helpful, 90% will say that its easy to get hold of the right person and 90% will say they find it easy to get hold of the information they need on the website.
- Most first line customer contact will be to dedicated, well trained, customer services staff within a unified council wide service.
- All council services will be accessible via one of eleven advertised council telephone numbers.

Notes

- (1) Customer Services aim to resolve all enquiries in one click, one call or one visit. This principle will underpin the transfer of all services from the back office to Customer Services and processes will be put in place for each new service area that transfers in order to continue to support this ambitious target. (The national recommended target is 80%)
- (2) This is reported from the MORI survey of council residents. In 2005 855 residents were contacted.

The milestones don't include anything about the neighbourhood agenda as future plans are unclear. I would anticipate more detail in the detailed 2009/10 work programme that will be brought to Members in February/March 2009.



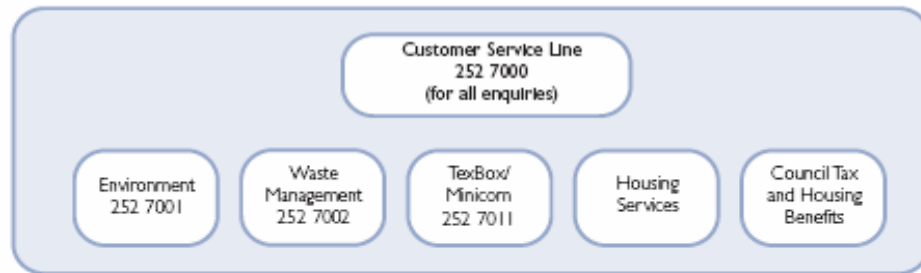
Appendix E

THE CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY 2005-2012

Telephone Access

We will review existing telephone access arrangements so that the majority of enquiries can be handled by a small number of well advertised numbers.

As far as practicable all enquiries will be handled by the Customer Service Line 252 7000, supported by a small number of contact centres for services with a clear identity and a critical mass of users.

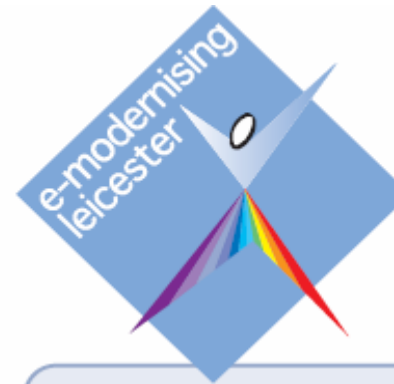


For more information about telephone access contact Melinda Buckby ext 7611

Principles

- We will design and develop services around the needs of local people; these needs will be identified through research and consultation;
 - Services will be delivered from a user perspective. The user should not need to know the organizational structure or internal processes of the Council in order to receive the service they require. Service provision should be seamless and as far as possible all requirements should be satisfied at the first point of contact;
 - Where demand justifies we will seek to provide a Council access point within one mile of every home in the City;
 - The solutions adopted will be financially realistic and sustainable;
 - Delivery options will be designed to maximise social inclusion by adopting a "design for all" approach that ensures all citizens' needs are met irrespective of age, gender, physical or financial ability, ethnic origin, race or religion;
 - Full consideration will be given to the needs and protection of our more vulnerable service users, arrangements to secure their safety and well being will remain of paramount importance;
 - Where opportunities allow, we will work in partnership with other agencies to provide joined up public services.
- Service design will be compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act;

For more information about the Customer Access Strategy contact Jill Craig ext 7412



THE CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY 2005-2012

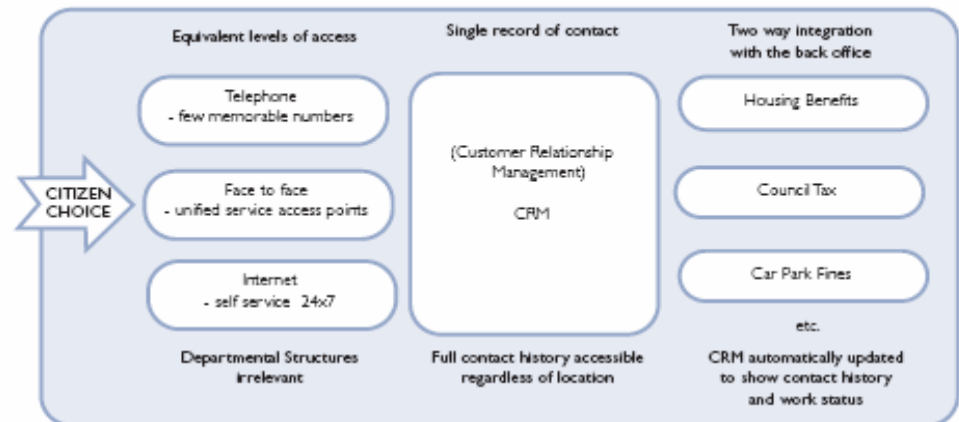
JOINING UP SERVICES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO COUNCIL SERVICES

OUR AIM:
At least 80% of all enquiries resolved on first contact.

- In seven years:
- Telephone access will be via a small number of well-advertised contact centres.
 - Relevant customer contact with the Council will be recorded in a corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system integrated with the back office.
 - All capable services will be enabled facilitating equivalent levels of access for customers whether they phone, visit personally or use the Internet.
 - We will have unified face-to-face access arrangements across all services (excepting sports and leisure).

Services joining together

A history of all customer contact held in one place accessible by many.



(Note: The CRM system is a computer software application that holds customer details and records customer contact with the Council. Currently deployed across the Council's two customer service centres and its corporate telephone service line, a project is in place to develop its use to enable delivery of the vision shown in the diagram above).

A record of all contacts will be held electronically in the most appropriate system, but accessible to authorised staff to achieve a seamless customer service. Front line Customer Service staff will handle general enquiries, passing only those more complex enquiries to the service specialists in back offices. The support systems will be designed so the customer only has to describe their enquiry once.



THE CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY 2005-2012

Face-to-face arrangements

Subject to funding, our strategy is to establish Customer Service Centres where research shows there is demand and a suitable permanent location can be found.

The diagram below illustrates the planned position by end 2005.



We will work closely with Corporate Property to review options for re-shaping and improving public access arrangements both as part of the Corporate Accommodation Review and as part of any review of area based services.

The most significant project for 2005/6 is a major review of the Council's main Customer Service Centre

in the New Walk Centre complex. The current centre was built in 1993 and is looking its age, however a refurbishment programme has been put on hold pending finalisation of plans to move the service to a larger site along with the Housing Benefits/Council Tax front of house.

For more information about face-to-face arrangements contact Pat Jones ext. 6497

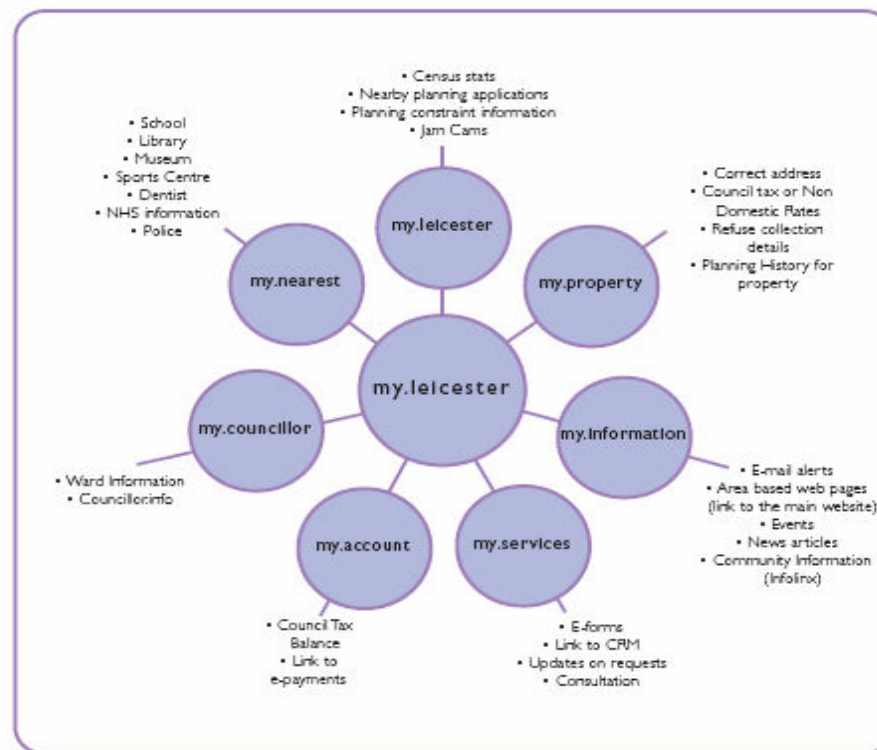


THE CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY 2005-2012

Internet access

We will develop 24 x 7 web access to secure, personalised services. Transactions will be automatically integrated into the corporate CRM to maintain the fully history of client contact with the Council.

Our vision is best illustrated by the following diagram:



The first phase of My Leicester is now live on our web site (www.leicester.gov.uk).

For more information about my.leicester contact Steve Scott ext 7618