

Leicester
City Council

Cabinet

**WARDS AFFECTED: All
Wards (with an
emphasis on
Braunstone Park and
Rowley Fields)
4 August 2003**

IMPROVED CUSTOMER ACCESS

Report of the Service Director ICT & Customer Access

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Members' agreement to taking forward 4 capital projects to improve customer access to Council Services.

2 Summary

- 2.1 In the 2002 Capital Programme, Cabinet set aside £300k capital over 3 years to contribute to customer service infrastructure developments as part of the Revitalising Neighbourhoods Project. A further Cabinet decision is required to agree specific uses of this allocation.
- 2.2 Last year's allocation of £100k (which was carried forward to this year) and this year's allocation of £100k could be used to contribute to 4 new customer access projects.
- The telephone access project (see paragraphs 3.1 – 3.4 and table 1)
 - The customer relations management system (see paragraphs 3.5 and table 2)
 - Customer services in libraries pilot scheme (see paragraphs 3.6 – 3.8)
 - The Braunstone Generic Reception Scheme in the new library (see paragraphs 3.9 – 3.10 and table 3).
- 2.3 All of the projects detailed in this report with the exception of the libraries pilot are time critical because they are a part of/or contribute to larger projects which have either started or are about to start.

3 Recommendations

Cabinet are asked to approve total capital expenditure of £200,000 funded from the "Corporate" Capital programme in respect of:-

1. £71k for the Council's telephone access project.
2. £16k for the purchase and installation of additional PC server hardware to improve the resilience of the Customer Relations Management software installation.

3. £15k to set up a customer services in libraries pilot scheme.
4. Allocating £85k to provide a Generic Reception area within the new Braunstone Library and Community Resource Centre.
5. A contingency sum for the above projects of £13k.

5 Financial & Legal Implications

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 In February 2002 the Revitalising Neighbourhoods Phase 1 report referenced a capital programme allocation of £100,000 for each year from 2002/3 – 2004/5. This was in accordance with the capital programme report for 2002/3 agreed by Council in January 2002.

5.1.2 The 2002/3 allocation was not spent and was agreed to be carried forward into 2003/4. The £200,000 required can be financed from within the agreed capital programme allocation.

5.1.3 Revenue costs accounted with all schemes can be contained with existing revenue budgets.

5.2 Legal Implications

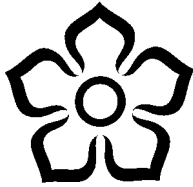
5.2.1 None.

6. Report Author

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DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	No
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)



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Improved Customer Access

Report of the Service Director ICT & Customer Access

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Report

1. Background

- 1.1 Members of Cabinet stated their commitment to improve customer access to services in the Phase 1 report on Revitalising Neighbourhoods agreed by Cabinet in February 2002.
- 1.2 From 2002/03 the Council allocated £100,000 per year from the "Corporate" Capital programme for the 3 years up to 2004/05. This capital was expected to contribute to further customer access points and the infrastructure needed to support good customer services.

2. The Timing of the Projects

- 2.1 Members of the Council Procedures Working Party at their meeting on the 23rd June 2003 confirmed their commitment to improving customer access to services.
- 2.2 All of the projects detailed in this report are time critical because they are a part of/or contribute to larger projects that have either started or are about to start.

3. The Projects

The Telephone Access Project

- 3.1 An internal review of Leicester City Council's telephone services during 2002, by the consultants KPMG, identified significant weaknesses in our existing telephone access arrangement and very low levels of customer satisfaction. Users were particularly critical of 'being passed around the Council' when phoning with a general enquiry.
- 3.2 This project will improve telephone access to Council services by developing a General Enquiries Contact Centre for the Council. The target date for launching the new service is October 2003 although this is subject to various accommodation moves. The centre will be made up of:

- Existing Council and Social Services switchboard teams;
- The ER&D Helpline;
- Additional staffing resources from Education, Social Care and Resources.

3.3 The target is that at least 80% of telephone service enquiries will be fully addressed within this Contact Centre, thus offering a more complete service and in turn reducing the pressure in the back office.

3.4 Departments have transferred funding for staff and general running costs, but there is no funding for setting up the project. Capital support to the project will help kick start the work and ensure that it's built on solid foundations.

Table 1

Capital Use	Amount
1. Additional resources to help develop training courses specifically for Call Centre staff and to develop a web-based knowledge database of frequently asked questions, scripting etc.	£5000
2. New space saving PCs (23 @ £1000 each)	£23000
3. Additional automatic call distribution (ACD) functionality:	
i) Call recording	£6000
ii) Wall board	£5000
iii) Report generator	£1000
4. Procure and implement web based software, fully integrated with the Customer Relations Management (CRM) software used within the Telephone Contact Centre, that will enable service users to submit enquiries and request information over the Internet.	£15000
5. Call centre furniture (23 @ £500)	£11500
6. Consultation and publicity (with an emphasis on hard to reach groups.)	£4500
Total	£71,000

The Customer Relations Management System

3.5 Customer Relations Management software is at the heart of the Council's Customer Access Strategy. This single database of customer contact information will enable us to give a more complete service to users of the General Enquiries Contact Centre and the Councils Customer Services Centres (NWC and New Parks). E-Government money is being used for the project, but there are a number of other competing projects and compromises are being made. This additional funding would be spent on Business Continuity to ensure that appropriate resilience is built into the solution to minimise the risk of service disruption. The target date for installation is October/November 2003.

Table 2

Capital Use	Amount
1. Business Continuity for the CRM server. The solution will be based on a second mirrored computer.	£16,000
Total	£16,000

Customer Services Surgeries in Libraries - A Pilot Scheme

3.6 Customer Services surgeries offer a method of service delivery that may prove effective in areas where there is a requirement for face-to-face access to Council services, but insufficient demand to justify a full time solution.

- 3.7 The funding will be used to develop a training scheme, pay for the temporary recruitment of a member of staff and to purchase a lap top computer and a mobile phone.
- 3.8 The training will take six months and the pilot could commence in spring of next year.

Braunstone General Reception Point

- 3.9 The Braunstone Community Association have commissioned Leicester City Council to design and build a new library and community resource centre on Braunstone Avenue with a total project budget of £2.975 million. This scheme presents a relatively low cost opportunity to establish the potential for another community based Customer Services point on the same model of the one that has proved so successful at New Parks.
- 3.10 If approved, this funding would be used to fund the build of a larger reception point into the centre that could, should future funding be identified, also accommodate two Customer Services Centre staff.

Table 3

Capital Use	Amount
1. Additional floor area for reception and contributions to an interview room, and baby feed at £1882 per m ² requiring 29m ²	£54 578
2. Reception desk, reception bulk head and security and fixed seating	£15000
3. Revised indices of 205 gives a 6.7% increase	£4661
4. Furniture, furnishings, ICT cabling, communications hardware etc	£10,000
Total	£84,239

The Contingency Sum

- 3.11 The contingency sum is set at below 10% of the overall costs.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 These four schemes will contribute significantly to the Councils Customer Access Strategy and deliver real and measurable improvements to the Council.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

1 Legal Implications

- 1.1 There are no legal implications

2 Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	PARAGRAPH REFERENCES WITHIN SUPPORTING PAPERS
Equal Opportunities	Yes	All these initiatives are designed to improve access to Council services for all our service users.
Policy	Yes	1. Customer Access Strategy 2. Revitalising Neighbourhood Phase 1 Report

		3. 2002/03 Capital Programme
Sustainable and Environmental	NO	
Crime and Disorder	NO	
Human Rights Act	NO	
Older People on Low Income	NO	

2.2 Risk Assessment Matrix

	Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/or appropriate)
1	Capital costs increase	M	M	Contingency Fund
2	Delays in the construction of the Braunstone library project	M	L	May need to slip a proportion of the capital into next year.

L - Low
M - Medium
H - High

L - Low
M - Medium
H - High

4 Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

- Capital Programme Report Jan 2002
- Revitalising Neighbourhoods Phase One report to Cabinet Feb 2002
- Procedure Working Party Minutes June 2003

5 Consultations

5.1 The following people were consulted during the writing of this report:

- Graham Feek, Financial Services
- Andy Keeling, Cultural Services

On the 9 July 2003 this report was also sent to:

- Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields Ward Councillors
- Cabinet Link and Spokesperson CS & NR
- Cabinet Link and Spokesperson RAD
- Tot Brill – Corporate Director
- Andy Morley – Accountant, RAD
- Peter Nicholls – Legal Services, RAD
- Maurice Brice – Consultant, ER&D
- Adam Archer – Project Manager CS and NR
- Pat Flynn – Head of Libraries Service

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