



Cabinet

25th April 2005

CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR (ICT & CUSTOMER ACCESS)

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present for Members consideration and agreement the Council's Customer Access Strategy.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Council's Customer Access Strategy covers the primary channels by which our customers access Council services - the telephone, face-to-face and the Internet. The first strategy was published in 2002 and progress against its comprehensive programme of work is shown at Appendix B in the Supporting Information.
- 2.2 This updated strategy covers the period 2005 – 2012, although the detailed work programme (Appendix A) only covers the period 2005-2007. We anticipate that the strategic aims will evolve over the lifetime of the strategy to include other access channels e.g. digital television. The strategy will be reviewed annually.
- 2.3 Through consultation, we know that the telephone is the preferred access channel for the majority of our service users - in excess of 70%. Face-to-face is generally the preferred method of access for the more vulnerable members of our society including the elderly, people for whom English is their second language, people with literacy difficulties, people on low income etc. Approximately 20% of our service users prefer face-to-face access. The Internet is growing in popularity and increasing numbers of people expect to fully transact with the Council on-line: current usage figures are estimated to be between 2 – 10% of our service users, and growing.
- 2.4 The principle aim of the strategy is to ensure that at least 80% of all enquiries are resolved on first contact.

In seven years we hope that:

- All telephone access will be via a small number of well-advertised contact centres working to consistent customer service levels.
- Relevant customer contact with the Council will be recorded in a corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM*) system, which will be integrated with back office functions.
- All capable services will be e-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).

*CRM is a computer software application that holds customer details and records customer contact with the Council.

2.5 Projects in the coming year include the opening of two further Neighbourhood Customer Service Centres (Saffron and Braunstone) and the launch of a mobile Customer Services Bus which will take the service to areas of greatest need across the City. We will also be able to use it for campaign promotion e.g. benefits take up.

2.6 In addition, we have scheduled extensive developments to the council's CRM system which is currently deployed across the Council's two customer service centres and its corporate telephone service line. Our CRM has been in use since December 2003 and has over 39,000 customer records. CRM developments include closer integration with back office systems and automated on-line request handling to provide 24x7 access to our services.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Cabinet are recommended to note the progress made since the Customer Care Best Value review in 2001 and endorse this updated Customer Access strategy.

4. Financial, Legal and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

4.1.1 Costs of the individual schemes that comprise the Customer Access implementation programme are shown in Appendix B.

4.1.2 Funding for the appended work programme has been made available through government funding, the capital programme, growth in the 05/06 revenue budget and through the use of existing resources.

Andy Morley/ Alison Greenhill

Financial Services
Ext 7404

4.2 Legal implications

- 4.2.1 Our powers to provide information about our services etc are in Section 142 of the Local Government Act 1972 and our powers to provide advice to consumers are in Section 75 of the Leicestershire Act 1985.
- 4.2.2 There will of course be health and safety, owners liability and insurance requirements concerning the bus and further enquiries should be made from Risk Management.
- 4.2.3 Service design and delivery should ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and, where appropriate, other legislation which specifically covers the sharing of data.

Joanna Bunting/ Carolyn Howard
Legal Services
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4.3 Other implications

IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph references within supporting information
Equal opportunities	Yes	2.1, 2.5
Policy	Yes	2.1, 2.5
Sustainable and environmental	No	
Crime and disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	Yes	1.2

5.0 Report Author

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