



Leicester  
City Council

Cabinet

25<sup>th</sup> April 2005

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## CUSTOMER ACCESS STRATEGY

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### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Customer Access strategy covers three main access channels: the telephone, face-to-face and the Internet. 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, estimated to be between 2 – 10% of our service users, and growing.
- 1.2 In addition to our own priorities for improvement, the Customer Access strategy has been influenced by the government's modernising agenda, which includes the requirement that all relevant services must be e-enabled by December 2005. In other words the citizen must be able to carry out all transactions electronically with the Council. The government targets also require that the Council retains a full record of contact with the customer so that they can review progress on an enquiry regardless of the access channel chosen i.e. whether the enquiry was raised over the Internet, face-to-face or over the telephone. This Customer Access Strategy is a key component of the Council's e-Modernising Leicester strategy (more details on which can be found on the Intranet).
- 1.3 The Council's first Customer Access Strategy was developed early 2002. See Appendix B for details of progress against identified actions.
- 1.4 This strategy covers the period 2005 – 2012, although the detailed work programme (Appendix A) only covers the period 2005-2007. We would anticipate that the strategic aims will evolve within this time frame to include other access channels e.g. digital television. The strategy will be reviewed annually.

## 2. The Customer Access Strategy 2005 – 2012

### 2.1 The over arching Customer Access Strategy



## **JOINING UP SERVICES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO COUNCIL SERVICES**

**Our aim:** At least 80% of all enquiries resolved on first contact.

In seven years:

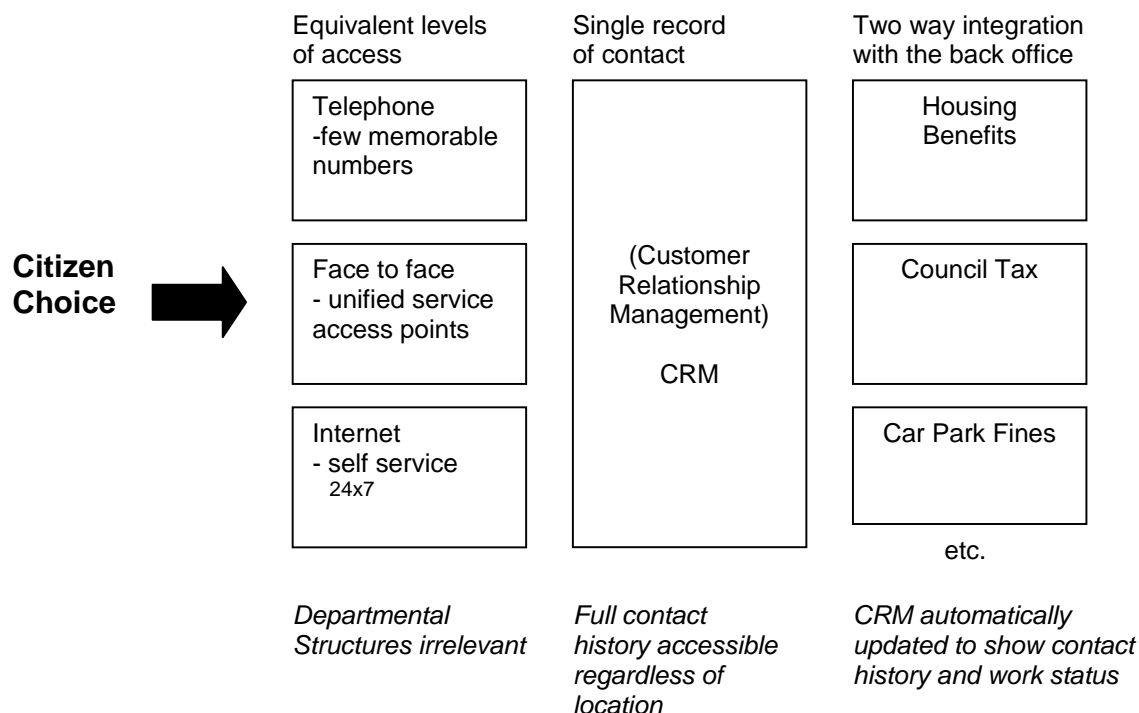
- All telephone access will be via a small number of well-advertised contact centres working to consistent customer service levels.
- Relevant customer contact with the Council will be recorded in a corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, which will be integrated with back office functions.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

*(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 captured in the following diagram).*

The following diagram illustrates the objectives listed above:

## Services joining together

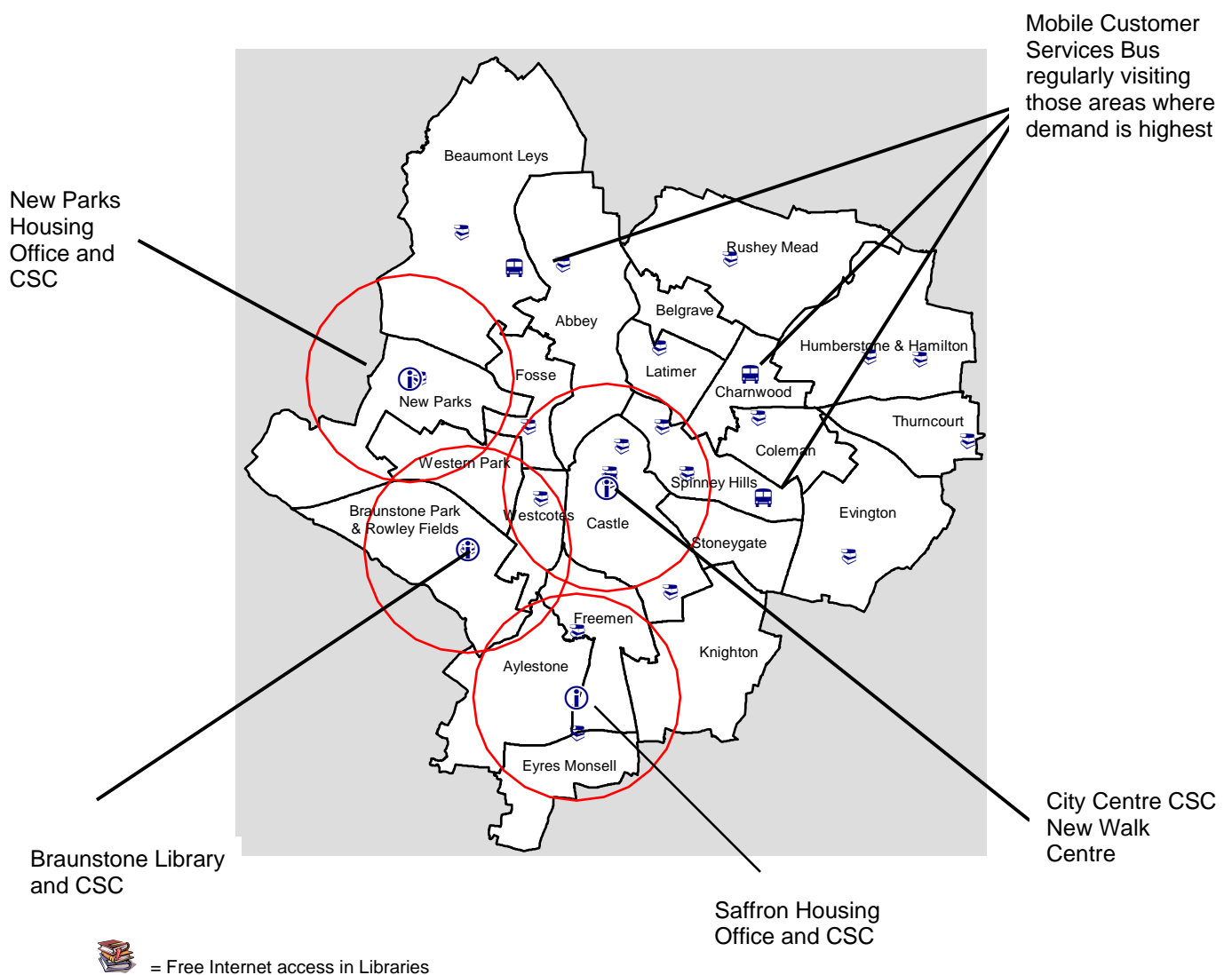
*A history of all customer contact held in one place accessible by many.*



- 2.1.1 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.
- 2.1.2 Front line Customer Service staff will handle general enquiries, passing only those more complex enquires to the service specialists in back offices. The support systems will be designed so the customer only has to describe their enquiry once.
- 2.1.3 The Council went live with its corporate CRM system in December 2003 and it has proved extremely valuable. We now have a complete client history for all customer contact across the telephone Service Line, the New Walk Customer Service Centre and the New Parks Customer Service Centre – some 39000 unique customer records, recording 65000 enquiries. An ambitious project is underway to more fully integrate the system with various back office systems: we are also looking at its potential to act as the Council's Corporate Complaints system and FOIA administration system.

## 2.2 Face-to-face arrangements

- 2.2.1 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.
- 2.2.2 During 2005 we plan to purchase and commission a fully equipped mobile Customer Services Centre called the Service Bus. This will visit those areas of the City that have an identified need for improved face-to-face service.
- 2.2.3 During the summer of 2005 we will be opening neighbourhood customer service centres in Braunstone, as part of the new Library/ Community Centre now known as the BRITE project, and Saffron within the Saffron Housing Office.
- 2.2.4 A PSA bid has been jointly submitted with Advice Services to fund some self-service access points in local community centres.
- 2.2.5 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.

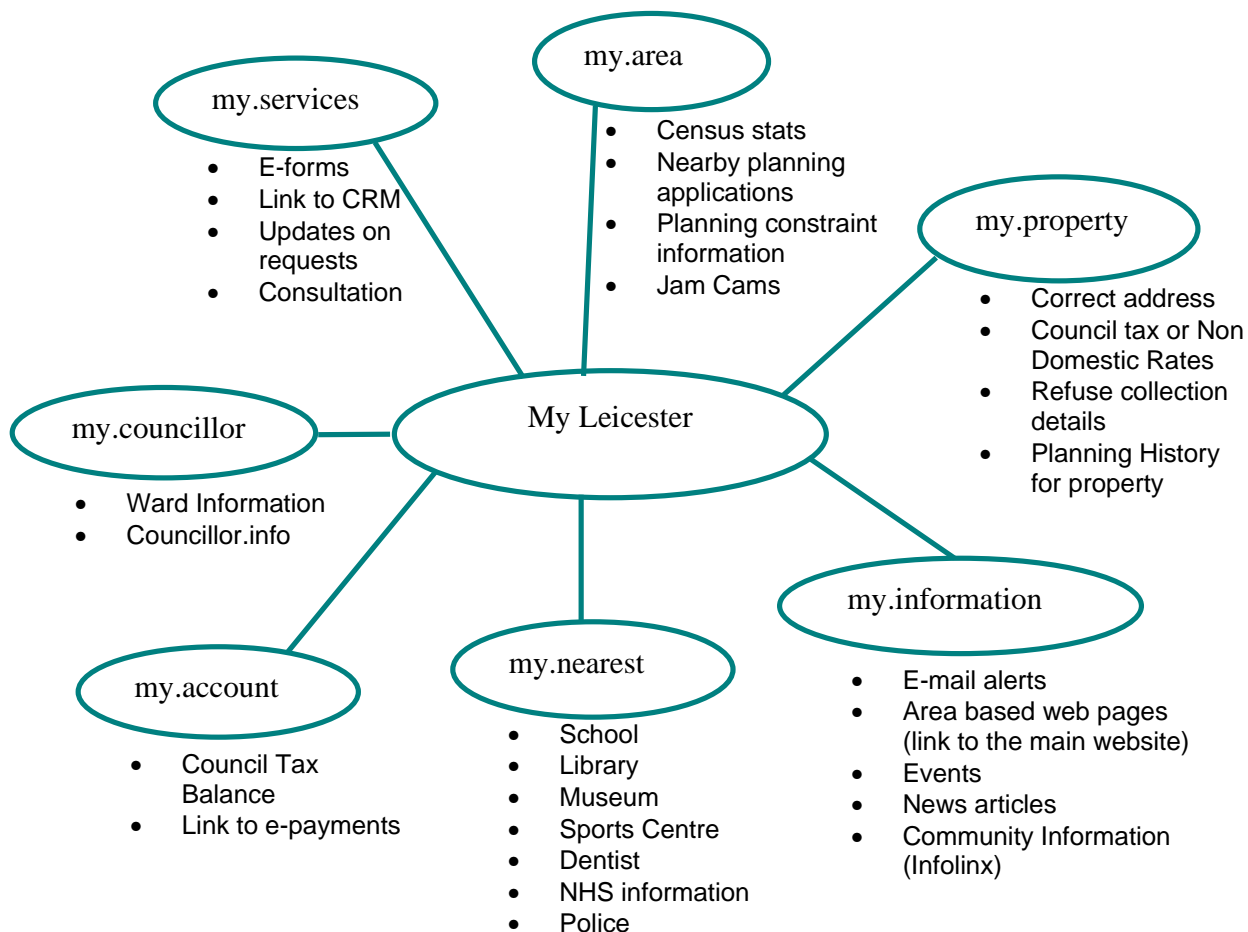
2.2.6 The most significant project for 2005/6 is a major review of the Council's main Customer Service Centre in the New Walk Centre complex. The current centre was built in 1993 and is looking its age, however a re-furbishment programme has been put on hold pending finalisation of plans to move the service to a larger site along with the Housing Benefits/ Council Tax front of house.

## 2.3 Internet access

2.3.1 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.

2.3.2 Our vision is best illustrated by the following diagram:

Diagram 3: *My.Leicester*



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

## 2.4 Telephone Access

- 2.4.1 We will review existing telephone access arrangements so that the majority of enquiries can be handled by a small number of well advertised numbers.
- 2.4.2 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.

*Few memorable numbers*

### Customer Service Line 252 7000 (for all enquiries)



## 2.5 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;

## 2.6 Work Programme for the period 2005 – 2007

See Appendix A.

## 2.7 Progress against the previous Customer Access Strategy work programme

See Appendix B.

## 3.0 Report author

**Jill Craig**  
**Service Director (ICT & Customer Access)**  
**Ext 7407**

### DECISION STATUS

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

## CUSTOMER ACCESS WORK PROGRAMME 2005-7

### CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT (CRM)

Description	Lead	Timescales	Revenue Cost	Capital Cost	Outcomes
Further develop the corporate CRM solution to include more integration with back office systems, including complaints management.	Jill Craig	A detailed programme of work exists for 2005/6 although general developments will be on-going for the life of the product.	£150,000 from e-government funding	-	Improved front of house service  Full history of customer contact  Improved business processes
Integrate the Corporate CRM with the Housing Contact Management system.	Jill Craig	Insert from project plan	Included in the £150,000 e-government budget	-	Seamless two way communication between the Corporate CRM and the Housing system.  Improved management information.  More effective business processes.

### INTERNET

Description	Lead	Timescales	Revenue Cost	Capital Cost	Outcomes
Develop transactional web services e.g. on-line payments and on-line forms	Ismail Vania	To be completed by Dec 2005 (in line with e-government targets)	£30,000 software and £15,000 implementation costs have been	-	24x7 access for service users  Improved front of house services as front line staff



Description	Lead	Timescales	Revenue Cost	Capital Cost	Outcomes
			met from Customer Care Capital programme and e-government moneys		can access these service on behalf of customers  More holistic customer service as the contacts will be recorded in the CRM to facilitate easier progress checking if required.
Develop My Leicester functionality	Ismail Vania	Phase 1 was completed Nov 2004; Phase 2 to be completed by Dec 2005.	Existing Web Team resources	-	Personalised web site that can be used by the public and intermediaries e.g. CSCs, CABs etc
Improve accessibility of all parts of Council web site	Ismail Vania	To be completed by Dec 2005	Existing Web Team resources	-	All parts of Council web site will be accessible and conform to level AA of W3C Web Initiative (WAI) standards on website accessibility.

## FACE-TO-FACE

Description	Lead	Timescales	Revenue Cost	Capital Cost	Outcomes
New City Centre Customer Service Centre (CSC) – co-locate existing CSC with Revs/Bens and other key front of house services	Jill Craig	Subject to corporate accommodation review	From existing budgets	To be confirmed. Part of CLABs review.	Improved Council HQ front of house service  More holistic service for the Council's service users More effective use of accommodation

<b>Description</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Revenue Cost</b>	<b>Capital Cost</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Re fresh CSC image, including new uniforms, as part of the move to a new CSC	Pat Jones	In line with the building of a new CSC	TBC	-	Raised morale Improved branding
Review NWC reception arrangements as part of CLABs review	Jill Craig	December 2006	TBC	TBC	Improved reception arrangements for both visitors and staff.  Improved security arrangements.  More effective use of accommodation
Braunstone Customer Services Centre	Pat Jones	Summer 2005	£85,000 per year (05/06 growth item)	£75,000 (covered within current capital programme)	Face-to-face access point covering one of the five areas that research has shown will most benefit from a CSC.
Saffron Customer Services Centre	Pat Jones	July 2005	£85,000 (05/06 growth item and contribution from Housing)	Housing meeting the costs as part of an existing refurbishment programme	Face-to-face access point covering one of the five areas that research has shown will most benefit from a CSC.
Mobile Customer Service Centre – the Service Bus	Pat Jones	Autumn 2005	£75,000 (05/06 growth item)	£80,000 (05/06 capital programme)	A mobile resource to cover the areas of the city most in need of a face-to-face service
Explore options for closer working between Advice Services, Libraries and Customer Services	Jill Craig	October 2005	-	A bid has been submitted for PSA funding for self	Improved benefit take-up  Increased numbers of visitors to Libraries

Description	Lead	Timescales	Revenue Cost	Capital Cost	Outcomes
				service kiosks in Libraries	

## TELEPHONE

Description	Lead	Timescales	Revenue Cost	Capital Cost	Outcomes
Procure a corporate call management solution for use by the Service Line, Housing Revs/Bens, Housing Management and others as required	Jill Craig	January 2005	From existing budgets	£130,000 Part funded from Department of Works and Pensions grant.	Improved Customer Service. Customer can be transferred from one service to another and keep their place in the queue.
Telephone Advice Line	Damon Gibbons	2005	TBC	TBC	
Launch Housing Revenues and Benefits Contact Centre	Tracie Rees	Spring 2005	From existing budgets	From existing budgets	Improved Customer Service

**Progress against tasks identified in the existing Customer Access strategy**

**Aim: To improve Neighbourhood Customer Access to Council Services;**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Officer/s</b>	<b>Other resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>How success will be measured</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Customer Service Centre to be piloted in New Parks offering local access to City Council Services	Pat Jones	Funding from Housing, Resources and Neighbourhood Renewal.	Scheduled to open Jan. 2003	To improve access to Council Services in New Parks. To pilot a neighbourhood CSC.	Customer feedback and user satisfaction surveys. Usage statistics.	The CSC opened in March 2003. Visitor numbers are more than double original estimates and user feedback (via face-to-face questionnaire) has been extremely positive.
Identification of external agencies to provide joined up public services for inclusion in New Parks pilot	Pat Jones	Appropriate accommodation was been included in the design of the new centre.	September 2002	To fully utilise available accommodation. To meet the service needs of the local community.	Usage. Sustained agency involvement.	Established surgeries include Welfare Advice, the Pensions Service and NHS smoking cessation. The partnership with Welfare advice has brought over £320,000 (over a 12 month period) additional income into the area.
Research neighbourhood service access requirements – to include analysis of	Richard Downing	The Revitalising Neighbourhoods project team. Pat Jones.	End October 2002	Provide robust baseline data to move project forward.	Data fit for purpose.	The analysis was completed. It cross referenced census data with other key data to highlight areas that would particularly benefit from face-to-face access points.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Officer/s</b>	<b>Other resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>How success will be measured</b>	<b>Comments</b>
existing data, customer consultation etc.						
Work closely with Social Services and Health to investigate the potential to integrate neighbourhood CSCs into the LIFT project.	David Oldershaw	Funding from PCTs and the NHS via the LIFT PFI programme. Funding may also come from Social Services depending on decisions about the Council's involvement.	From mid 2004	To provide locally based integrated Health and Social Care Services	Customer feedback. Development of new integrated services.	Social Care and Health have secured PFI funding to ensure their involvement in four LIFT centres and have submitted a bid for inclusion in a further two. We will work closely with the department to determine what if any role CSCs will have.
Work with BCA to explore opportunities of a neighbourhood CSC in Braunstone as part of a local centre	Andy Keeling	Pat Jones	End Sept 2002	Maximise partnership opportunities with BCA		A CSC is included in the build for the new Braunstone Library/Community Centre. This is scheduled to open summer 2005.
Evaluate research to determine the location	Service Director (RN)	The Revitalising Neighbourhoods project team. Pat Jones.	Early November 2002	Identify preferred access arrangements	Recommendations supported by robust evidence.	Locations identified – Beaumont Leys, Charnwood, Saffron Lane, Braunstone.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Officer/s</b>	<b>Other resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>How success will be measured</b>	<b>Comments</b>
of possible CSC pilots.				for each neighbourhood.		
Organise pilot surgeries.	Pat Jones/ Richard Downing	Use the additional staffing resources that have been appointed for the New Parks Pilot. The Communications Unit for marketing and publicity.	November/ December 2002	To collate further information to support the findings of RD's research.	Availability of meaningful and comprehensive supporting data	In practice, there was no capacity in the resource levels of the service to progress the pilots.
Identify suitable sites / locations for the provision of Service Centres or alternative means of providing access to Council Services (based on Richard's research)	The RN team	Pat Jones/ Lynn Cave	April 2003	Identification of sites.	Written report with recommendations supported by data.	An NRF bid to fund CSC surgeries in libraries was rejected.  Funding has been approved for a mobile service to visit those areas of the city that are not serviced by a permanent CSC resource.
To present	Service	As required	June 2003	To agree	Delivery	There have been various

<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Officer/s</b>	<b>Other resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>How success will be measured</b>	<b>Comments</b>
options and funding implications for consideration by DB and Members.	Director (NR)			customer access delivery model for each neighbourhood.	model agreed and resource implications addressed.	funding debates. Additional moneys have been found for 2005/6.
To submit a joint bid with Strasbourg for European funding for Customer Access initiatives.	Andrew Thomas	Service Directors (NR, Property and ICT &CA) Pat Jones RN Project Team	March 2003	Secure funding for customer access initiatives.	Funding secured.	Strasbourg withdrew from the joint bid.

***Aim: To improve City Centre access to Council Services***

<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Other resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>How success will be measured</b>	<b>Comments</b>
To identify the detailed requirements of an expanded City Centre Customer Services centre. This	Jill Craig	External consultancy to be funded by the Resources department.	TBA	Current arrangements are inconsistent across the Council and confuse the customer. It also makes closer working	Strategy and implementation plan agreed by Directors' Board and Members.	Solutions have been identified and two possible locations are currently being considered.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Other resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>How success will be measured</b>	<b>Comments</b>
will require a review of the range of services offered through Service Centres Centre and a review of opening hours				between sections more difficult.		
Identify and conduct feasibility study of potential locations for a new City Centre Flagship Customer Service Centre	Jill Craig	TBA with Corporate Property	TBA			Various sites have been considered – options have now been reduced to two possible locations.



**Aim: To improve telephone access to Council Services**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Other resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>How success will be measured</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Implement the 'quick wins' identified in the KPMG report and agreed by SRG at its meeting on 28 <sup>th</sup> May.	Dept'l leads (SRG)	See KPMG report	October 2002			
Development of a corporate contact centre to incorporate general, Education and Social Service enquiries	Pat Jones	Funding from Resources, Social Services, Education and ER&D (as per Project Brief.)  Accommodation TBA.	March 2003	To improve the time taken to answer phone enquiries. To improve Customer Satisfaction ratings.	Customer feedback Usage statistics Performance monitoring	Implementation was slow because of accommodation problems and recruitment delays. The centre opened January 2004, and was officially launched in June 2004.
Further development of Corporate call centre to incorporate Environment &	Pat Jones	As per Project Brief	June 2003	To improve the time taken to answer phone enquiries. To improve Customer Satisfaction	Customer feedback Usage statistics Performance monitoring	Specific tasks were completed to schedule although developments are on-going.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Other resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>How success will be measured</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Development enquiries.				ratings.		
Develop a single call centre for Council Tax and Housing Benefits	Dave Pate	Under review	TBA			Arrangements are in place. The team will start using the corporate call management system, which will facilitate the easy transfer of calls from the Service Line as soon as it is moved to its new accommodation.
Post implementation review of the general call centre	Jill Craig		December 2003			Complete
Review the Council's long-term call centre strategy.	Jill Craig		Jan-Apr 2004			See proposed Customer Access strategy.

**Aim: To improve Internet access**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Other resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>How success will be measured</b>	<b>Comments</b>
All frontline services to be publishing	Ismail Vania		Ongoing	To provide an alternative electronic channel of	The number of services that can be contacted by	The Council's A-Z is currently being updated, including a review of service e-mail addresses.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Other resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>How success will be measured</b>	<b>Comments</b>
an email contact address on the Internet				communication	email and the volume of email contacts made	
Identify then make available on-line, frequently requested Council forms and applications for services	Lisa Cattanach		Ongoing	To achieve e-government/ electronic service delivery targets	Volume of transactions	Frequently requested forms and some services are available under 'Online Services' of the Council's web site
On-line payment facilities to be in place for 80% of paid Council services	Paul Masters		Sept/Oct 2002	To provide an alternative means of paying invoices.	Volume of transactions.	Most services for which invoices are raised can be paid for on-line by debit or credit card. The e-payments project will extend this to all paid-for Council services.
To establish an information and consultation 'network' for disabled people in Leicester.	Justin Hammond	Invest to Save funding	March 2003	Initially, computers connected to the Internet will be placed in Social Services day centres for disabled people.	Use and take up of the service.	Leicester Disability Network went live in July 2003 and has won several national awards.

**Aim: To improve the effectiveness of enquiry handling**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Lead Officer/s</b>	<b>Other resources</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>How success will be measured</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Implement a customer tracking system initially for use within main customer access points	Pat Jones	IEG funding 2002/3 and 2003/4	February 2003	Improve administrative effectiveness. Improved management information. More complete service to the customer 'closing the loop'.	Streamlined business processes. Availability of management information. Customer feedback.	The system when live in December 2003
Integration of the CRM system with back office systems	Pat Jones	Part IEG funding. Integration funding required.	Proof of concept March 2003 / Ongoing	As above plus improved business processes.	As above plus other back office services keen to integrate with CRM.	Some integration has been achieved. Work is on-going.
Review existing arrangements to respond to e-mail requests	Lisa Cattanach		February 2003	Improve response to customers queries or requests for service by email	Reduction in the time needed to respond to customers queries or service requests	Acknowledgments are made within 24 hours and substantive replies within 10 days.

					made by email	
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