



Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)

Time and Date

10.00 am on Wednesday, 7th July, 2021

Place

This meeting will be held remotely. The meeting can be viewed live by pasting this link into your browser: <https://youtu.be/GHhqlyWOxIA>

Public Business**1. Apologies and Substitutions****2. Declarations of Interest****3. Minutes**

(a) To note the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021 and the joint meeting with Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) on 23 March 2021 (Pages 3 - 16)

(b) Matters Arising

4. Digital First Programme (Pages 17 - 30)

Briefing Note

5. Customer Services (Pages 31 - 44)

Briefing Note

6. Work Programme and Outstanding Issues (Pages 45 - 48)

Report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator

7. Any other items of Public Business

Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved

Private Business

Nil

Julie Newman, Director of Law and Governance, Council House, Coventry

Tuesday, 29 June 2021

Notes:1)The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Carolyn Sinclair, Governance Services, Council House, Coventry, alternatively information about this meeting can be obtained from the following web link:

<http://moderngov.coventry.gov.uk>

2) Council Members who are not able to attend the meeting should notify Carolyn Sinclair as soon as possible and no later than 9am on the day of the meeting giving their reasons for absence and the name of the Council Member (if any) who will be attending the meeting as their substitute.

3) Scrutiny Board Members who have an interest in any report referred to this meeting, but who are not Members of this Scrutiny Board, have been invited to notify the Chair by 12 noon on the day before the meeting that they wish to speak on a particular item. The Member must indicate to the Chair their reason for wishing to speak and the issue(s) they wish to raise.

Membership: Councillors J Blundell, R Brown (By Invitation), B Gittins, A Hopkins, T Khan, R Lakha, K Maton, B Mosterman, J O'Boyle (By Invitation), T Sawdon and R Singh (Chair)

By Invitation: Councillors R Brown, J O'Boyle

Carolyn Sinclair

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e-mail: carolyn.sinclair@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) held
at 10.00 am on Wednesday, 24 February 2021
This meeting was held remotely

Present:

Members: Councillor R Singh (Chair)
Councillor N Akhtar
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor B Gittins
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor T Sawdon

Other Members: Councillor R Brown, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance
and Resources

Employees: V Castree, Law and Governance
B Hastie, Director of Finance
P Jennings, Corporate Finance
L Knight, Law and Governance
H Williamson, Corporate Finance

Apologies: Councillors F Abbott, R Auluck, G Hayre and T Khan

Public Business

23. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

24. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January, 2021 were agreed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

25. Financial Impact of COVID-19

The Board considered a briefing note of the Finance Manager, Corporate Finance which provided an update on the financial impacts on the Council resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. The note highlighted the overall level of 2020/21 Covid funding; the latest Covid impact within the January return to Government; the 2020/21 Quarter 3 financial reporting; business grants; and the 2021/22 budget impacts. Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources attended the meeting for the consideration of this item.

The briefing note referred to the overall level of 2020/21 Covid funding, indicated that the Government had made a series of funding announcements throughout the period since March 2020 resulting in upwards of 45 separate Covid grant funding streams including those for business grants. A table detailing the non-business grant funding streams was set out which highlighted £47.2m to fund Council

expenditure and £10m for external provider or programme spend, which mainly related to funding for Adult Social Care providers. Most of these grants represented final allocations that had been made to the City Council, while several were initial allocations subject to monitoring/ verification.

Through 2020/21 all councils had been required to report their forecast of the financial impact of Covid in monthly returns to Government. The Council's January return showed an overall impact of £52m. A breakdown of the areas of financial impact was set out. A further £5m related to estimated Business Rates and Council Tax (Collection Fund) losses for the year although accounting convention required that these losses were accounted for in the following financial year. These Collection Fund losses had been included in the Council's budget setting forecasts for 2021/22.

The quarter 3 financial monitoring position included figures showing Covid funding of £33.8m and associated Covid pressures of £34.2m representing a shortfall of £0.4m. The position reported to Cabinet on 16 February, 2021 showed a forecast revenue overspend for the year of £33.3m. After the application of general Covid grant funding the net underspend was £0.5m. This position confirmed the position adopted earlier in the financial cycle that the Director of Finance would not need to issue a Section 114 notice. The Scrutiny Board were informed that although the Council appeared to be approaching a position whereby it could manage its Covid financial pressures in the current year on a forecast basis, there were caveats to this position. The forecasting of some areas of costs and income losses remained assumption sensitive, even at the relatively late stage of the financial year. The briefing note set out examples of the challenges.

Information was provided on business grants and business rates reliefs. The extended Business Rates relief applied to all businesses with a rateable value below £51,000 and all businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors in the early part of 2020/21. This resulted in reliefs totalling £49m, 100% of which had been processed by the Council. In addition, the initial small business grants, retail, hospitality and leisure business grants and local authority grants totalling £50.9m were paid to c4,500 Coventry businesses over the summer. Following the initial round of business support grants, the Government had introduced a variety of further grants to support businesses through the different levels of restrictions seen since October 2020. The Council was responsible for the administration of these grants. An appendix attached to the briefing note provided details of each grant and included the purpose of the grant, the amount given to the Council to administer and the amount of grant paid to businesses to date. The total number of businesses supported did not represent individual businesses as many businesses would have been eligible for multiple grant streams. These schemes were at different stages of maturity with decisions and allocations still being processed. Council services continued to facilitate and lead on a range of other support measures which were detailed.

Reference was made to the 2021/22 budget impacts. In addition to the significant funding provided by Government through 2020/21, the final Local Government Settlement announced on 10 February included further grants to support the Council's 2021/22 budget which in-full or in-part referenced Covid conditions for their inclusion. This funding currently totalled c£18m and incorporated:

- £11.3m 2021/22 COVID-19 Expenditure Pressures Grant

- £3.9m Local Council Tax Support Grant
- £2.5m 2021/22 Social Care Grant
- £0.6m Lower Tier Services Grant.

Set against this, the Council's budget assumed £9m of identified income loss and expenditure pressures and £12m of revenue foregone within its Council Tax and Business Rates position. There was also an expectation of further financial pressure through the year in areas such as Children's Services and car park income which were not included in the budget but which it was expected would need to be funded from the Covid-19 Expenditure Pressures grant. Based on this position, the Council's budget had already borne a £3m Covid funding shortfall which was likely to increase (based on current forecast expectations) unless further Government funding was announced.

The Council's 2021/22 budget proposals considered by Council the previous day had incorporated current circumstances so the Council should be able to absorb the financial impacts of Covid on current estimates. The 2022/23 budget setting process was due to commence and would include as part of its consideration the legacy impacts of Covid, the assessed threats of further outbreaks over the medium term and the success of future vaccination strategies. With the exception of one or two specific examples (e.g. dividends) the Council's medium term position did not include significant impacts and the extent to which this was a robust position would be kept under review as the year progressed.

The Board questioned the officers on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included:

- Clarification as to whether Government funding covered all Council expenditure due to Covid
- Further details about the Local Tax Income Guarantee scheme and the £5m loss this year and £7m next year
- Additional information about business rates relief
- Understanding the financial impact of Covid-19 on the Council finances following the impact of the recent years of Government austerity
- Was there flexibility with the use of the Covid grant funding for services for example could any underspends be used elsewhere
- Clarification about the figures included in the Council's January return which showed an overall impact of £52m
- Details about the steps taken to make people aware of the availability of grants to assist businesses and the need for the Council to be proactive to promote take-up
- Information about the Test and Trace isolation payments including criteria
- Further details about the Winter Grant Scheme and the Community Champions Fund
- An acknowledgement of all the work undertaken by officers to administer the business support grants and details about issues that had arisen
- Information about the impact of the restrictions on the budget for the City of Culture programme.

The Chair, Councillor Lakha and the Cabinet Member, Councillor Brown placed on record their thanks to the Director of Finance, the Finance Manager, Corporate Finance and all the team for all the significant work that they have undertaken as a

result of the Covid pandemic, which has been in addition to the usual day to day work.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The contents of the briefing note be noted.

(2) Proactive communications to be used to encourage those eligible for support to claim it.

(3) Additional information on the Winter Grant Scheme and the Community Champions Fund be circulated to members.

26. Capital Programme 2020/21 and 2021/22

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Finance Manager Corporate Finance which provided an update on the Council's capital programme for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The briefing note included an appendix which gave an analysis of the Council's estimated outturn capital spend for 2020/21; the planned programme for 2021/22; and the estimated remaining spend in each area for the following three years. The Board were informed that the quarter three estimated outturn reported to Cabinet on 23rd February was £230,943,000, the 2021/22 capital programme forecast was £220,406,000 and the 2022/23 to 2024/25 capital programme was £259,419,000. Further details were provided on the costs of individual schemes. A breakdown of the resources for the capital programme was set out. Attention was drawn to the £173,039,000 of grant funding included in the quarter 3 estimated outturn position. The significant size of the capital programme compared to previous years was highlighted.

The Board questioned the officers on a number of issues and responses were provided, matters raised included

- Clarification that no funding had been lost due to time constraints caused by the covid pandemic
- If local businesses were able to benefit from the schemes included in the capital programme.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The contents of the capital programme 2020/21 and 2021/22 be noted.

(2) Officers to establish whether any grants are available to local business or community organisations, and, if so, to circulate the details to members.

27. Work Programme and Outstanding Issues

The Board noted their work programme for the current municipal year.

28. Any other items of Public Business

There were no additional items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.55 am)

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Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Joint Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise
Scrutiny Board (3) and Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) held at
2.00 pm on Wednesday, 24 March 2021
(This meeting was held remotely)

Present:

Members: Councillor Miks (Chair)
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor G Hayre
Councillor M Heaven
Councillor T Jandu
Councillor R Lakha
Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor C Miks
Councillor E Ruane
Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor R Singh

Other Members (by invitation):

Councillor R Brown – Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources
Councillor K Maton – Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Councillor J O'Boyle - Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration

By invitation:

A Barbour – Severn Trent
G Gathercole – Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Employees (by Directorate):

Education and Skills

K Mawby, G Smailes

Human Resources

S Newing (Director of Human Resources), G Haynes, A Hyland

Legal and Governance

V Castree, G Holmes, M Salmon

Apologies:

Councillor F Abbott
Councillor R Ali
Councillor R Auluck
Councillor B Gittins
Councillor B Singh (Retrospective)

Public Business

1. Election of Chair

A proposal was received from Councillor R Lancaster that Councillor C Miks be elected as Chair of the Joint meeting. The proposal was seconded by Councillor R Singh.

RESOLVED that Councillor Miks be appointed as Chair of the Joint meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise (3) and Finance and Corporate Resources Scrutiny Board (1).

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

3. Citywide and Council Apprenticeship Update

The Joint Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) and Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) received a briefing note of the Director of Education and Skills and the Director of Human Resources that provided an update on Citywide and Council Apprenticeships. A report that had been prepared in partnership between the City Council's Employment and Skills Service and the Organisational Development Team was attached as an Appendix to the briefing note. Further Appendices provided the Council's Apprenticeship Strategy; Data on Trends, Age, Gender, Equalities and WMCA Levy Transfer; and Case Studies.

Apprenticeships combined hands-on work with the opportunity to train and obtain qualifications: 'Earning whilst you learn, with 20% of an apprentice's paid working time set aside for classroom based and/or online learning. 700 apprenticeship standards were available with traditional and employed apprenticeships offered. Overall, since 2016/17 apprenticeship starts for England had fallen 34% with higher-level apprenticeships increasing by 125% since 2016/17. Covid-19 had impacted on apprenticeship starts for all levels in 2019/20 with varying impacts across age, gender and sector. Coventry followed a similar trend to England but with 200% growth of higher-level apprenticeships.

There had been a series of apprenticeship regulatory reforms since 2016/17 that had impacted on apprenticeship delivery, including a minimum of 20% off the Job Training, a change from Apprenticeship Standards to Frameworks, and increased course costs. In addition, in April 2017 an Apprenticeship Levy was introduced for all employers paying a wage bill of more than £3 million per year (approx. 3% of UK businesses), requiring them to pay 0.5% of their payroll each month as a levy tax. The levy had resulted in increased numbers of apprentices with large employers and an increase in higher-level apprenticeships.

Statistically, compared to national figures, Coventry had a higher proportion of female apprentices, in particular, in intermediate and higher-level apprenticeships and had slightly lower levels of 19-24-year-old learners. National data suggested apprenticeships were broadly representative of population in ethnicity.

Traineeships had helped bridge the gap for lower level learners including those with learning difficulties/disabilities into apprenticeships with limited success. Numbers of traineeships were down nationally partly due to the pandemic and also the Government adding in grants of £2000 per trainee for businesses who supported Traineeships for Academic Year 2020/21 and a further increase in this grant to £3000 per trainee, announced in the 3rd March 2021 Spring Budget.

Supported Internships could be a good alternative to Apprenticeships for those with learning disabilities, with learners supported through skilled Job Coaches for their work experience placements. The City Council's Employment and Skills Service had been successfully running Supported Internships in partnership with Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust for the last 5 years and this had recently expanded to include Warwick University, with further plans for the Council itself to act as a host employer.

The Apprenticeship and Early Careers Team within the Council's Organisational Development Section were responsible for managing the Council's Apprenticeship Programme and delivering the actions set out in the Council's Apprenticeship Strategy. The team engaged with managers across the Council to identify opportunities to create new apprenticeship roles and provide support with recruitment, identifying suitable apprenticeship standards and providing advice and guidance to managers and apprentices to ensure the quality of placement was maintained. The Team also worked with Local Authority maintained schools. At 1st March 2021 the Council had 70 traditional apprentices in post. Apprenticeship starts had decreased in the last 12 months compared to the same period a year before, mirrored nationally, with the main factor in the decrease due to the challenges associated with the Coronavirus Pandemic. Support to existing apprentices throughout this challenging time had continued, by working closely with training providers to transition to online/remote delivery for continuity of apprenticeships. The Council has also been able to successfully support its apprentices that have come to the end of their apprenticeships during this period into positive destinations. 81% of all apprentices that finished between 01/03/20 – 01/03/21 went into a positive destination, this is up from 78% in the previous year.

The Authority has continued to utilise the Apprenticeship Levy funding to support the training and development of the existing workforce with a total of 49 different types of apprenticeship being undertaken, from service/role specific apprenticeships through to corporate offerings such as Project Management.

Further, the Authority had been a training provider (The Adult Education Service - Coventry Adult Education trained 308 apprentices) providing apprenticeship training for Coventry City Council and City Council Maintained schools. In addition, it provided apprenticeship training for Private Sector Nurseries and to Academy Schools. The Education and Skills Team also provided support to schools to help them promote Apprenticeships as part of their statutory duties to provide careers guidance.

The Council's Employment and Skills Service encompassed the Job Shop, Employer Hub, Adult Education, the Youth Hub and Disability Employment Support and it sat within the Education & Skills Service. It had a strategic influencing role for skills provision across Coventry and this included Apprenticeships. The Job Shop had developed an Employer Hub which engaged

with hundreds of the City's employers to offer high quality and free recruitment support and to recruit Apprentices.

Kickstart was a Department for Work and Pensions scheme that provided funding for employers to create six-month paid job placements with a minimum of 25 hours per week for those aged 16-24 and claiming Universal Credit. The Authority was an Employment and Skills Service Kickstart Gateway support and provider.

In respect of future plans for City Council Apprenticeships, the Authority:

- Were currently finalising plans to increase apprentice recruitment in the coming months to bring numbers back up to pre-Covid levels with an ambition to recruit 100 apprentices in the next 12 months.
- In line with the Apprenticeship Strategy 2020-2022, planned to revise the process of recruiting corporate apprentices to include a workforce planning approach, promote diversity, inclusion and social mobility by building on the changes to practice in attraction, recruitment and selection that had been implemented in corporate recruitment to ensure apprentices recruited were reflective of the communities served.
- Through workforce planning meetings with Heads of Service, would identify new opportunities to utilise apprenticeships to upskill the Council's workforce.
- Would evaluate all apprenticeships to ensure they remained fit for purpose and added value to the needs of the employee and organisation.
- Would work with the Economic Development Service to allocate the remaining Levy transfer allowance to support Coventry residents and businesses.

In respect of future plans for Citywide Apprenticeships:

- The Employment & Skills Service would build on its strong partnership base, ensuring the Skills Board and Labour Market Intelligence Group responded to the needs of residents and employers.
- Continue to widen employer networks, including working alongside the Economic Development Service, and building relationships with growing sectors and Anchor Institutions.
- Support planned widening of apprenticeships as set out in the Government's Skills for Jobs: 'Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth' White Paper, January 2021.
- Continue working with colleagues to look to establish the City Council as a Supported Internship host employer.

The Board questioned officers, received responses and discussed the following issues:

- Apprenticeships would be considered for all capital projects being undertaken in the City
- The Job Shop, Schools and Colleges all provided advice to students on future career paths which included apprenticeship opportunities
- Apprentices were a vital element to the future workforce of the City
- Severn Trent, a major employer in the City, anticipated 50 apprenticeship starts in 2022/21, a number of which had been from social mobility cold spots

- Government data was used to identify target areas such as social mobility cold spots. Work was undertaken to ensure inclusivity and the representation of all groups with further work to be done in this area and good practice planned for the future
- The effects of the pandemic had had a detrimental effect on the usual number of apprenticeship starts in the last 12 months, in particular there were lower numbers at the intermediate level
- Supported internships provided opportunities to those from special schools, Hereward college and those with disabilities requiring support. Links to the labour market were in place with regular meetings to these links
- Levy transfer had benefitted 43 Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) both within the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and non-constituent members of the Authority (in the surrounding area)
- It was important that the Apprenticeship Levy transfer to the Combined Authority was prioritised for re-distribution to SME's within the seven metropolitan boroughs of the WMCA
- The Council was a gateway provider for Kickstart applications. 297 Kickstart placement applications had been made and were making good progress
- There were varying levels of apprenticeships at the Council, this included 31 employees on degree level apprenticeships and 18 employees on MA level apprenticeships
- There were 65 vacant apprenticeships across a number of sectors and levels in the City. Work was being undertaken on levels of apprenticeships for the future to ensure the skills needs of employers were met
- It was important to promote apprenticeships with employers and also to target work with Coventry children, especially those with disabilities where there was currently a low level of take-up.
- The supported internships were positive routes for those with learning difficulties
- The lack of take-up of apprenticeships by Coventry residents at the Severn Trent Headquarters in Coventry, was a concern
- Youth employment was greater in Coventry than in other areas, before and after the impact of the pandemic. It was important to reach the 19-24-year-old age group as much as possible including through schools, colleges and youth hubs and that the City Council maximised its offer of employment opportunities to young people
- A Government White paper issued in January 2021 included a £2.5billion investment in apprenticeships. Future announcements were expected
- A recent change in standards had resulted in Level 2 apprenticeship numbers dropping as some had now become level 3 and others hadn't met the standards
- It was important to understand the work of the Coventry Skills Board and the Labour Market Intelligence Group and how they linked
- The Authority would continue to monitor sectors and levels of City Council apprentices and the number of apprentices who were Looked After Children on the Authority's Apprenticeship Programme
- The City of Culture Panel would be requested to recommend that the City of Culture Trust considered increasing the number of apprenticeship opportunities they offered and also offering opportunities with the Kickstart Scheme.

The Board requested that they be provided with the following:

- 1) Information on the current number of apprentices who were Looked After Children on Coventry City Council's Apprenticeship Programme
- 2) Details of the sectors and levels of vacancies that made up the 65 vacant apprenticeships
- 3) Information on the work of the Coventry Skills Board and the Labour Market Intelligence Group and how they linked
- 4) Details of sectors and levels of City Council apprentices

The Board also requested that Severn Trent investigate why apprentices at the Coventry Office of the organisation were not Coventry residents.

RESOLVED that the Joint Meeting of Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) and Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) agreed:

- 1) **To continue to recognise the achievement of the Organisational Development Team in continuing to run successful apprenticeship schemes in challenging circumstances and in successfully using the Apprenticeship Levy and Levy Transfer Scheme to drive up apprenticeship numbers for Coventry.**
- 2) **To continue to recognise the Employment and Skills Service key strategic role in supporting Apprenticeship Training Providers and Employers.**
- 3) **To support the aims of the Organisational Development Team - in line with the Council's Apprenticeship Strategy 2020-2022, to increase Traditional Apprentice numbers to pre-Covid levels whilst maintaining a focus on quality and diversity.**
- 4) **To support the expansion of the Employment and Skills Service Supported Internship programme with the City Council acting as a host employer.**
- 5) **That the following recommendations be submitted to the appropriate Cabinet Member:**
 - a) **The Apprenticeship Levy transfer to the Combined Authority is prioritised for re-distribution to SME's within the seven metropolitan boroughs of the WMCA.**
 - b) **The City Council maximise their offer of employment opportunities to young people.**

6) To recommend that the City of Culture Panel request that the City of Culture Trust:

a) Consider increasing the number of apprenticeship opportunities they offer.

b) Consider offering opportunities with the Kickstart Scheme.

4. Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.40 pm)

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Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board 1

Date: 7th July 2021

Subject: Digital First programme

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board 1 with information on the Digital First programme. The supporting presentation provides Scrutiny Board 1 with an update on the main activities undertaken through the programme in recent months and provides an overview of the next phase of the programme.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board 1 is recommended to:
- 1) Consider the content of the presentation attached at Appendix 1
 - 2) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member
 - 3) Identify any areas the Board would like to consider in more detail at a future meeting

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The Digital First programme forms part of the council's One Coventry Transformation programme, which aims to deliver the council's One Coventry ambitions. The Digital First programme tests out and develops new digital services and ways of working. The programme focusses on enabling council services, our communities and our workforce to benefit from digital innovations and improvements.
- 3.2 The programme is working to delivery digital improvement projects at varying scales, from specific service initiatives through to large scale integrated city wide programmes. The Digital First programme aims to deliver the ambitions of the One Coventry approach and council's Digital Strategy.
- 3.3 The presentation in Appendix 1 provides Scrutiny Board 1 with an overview of the digital service and infrastructure improvements being made to our city. This provides the context for the next phase of Digital First improvement focus.

Name: Marc Greenwood

Position: Head of Business Systems and Improvement

Contact details: 024 7697 1197

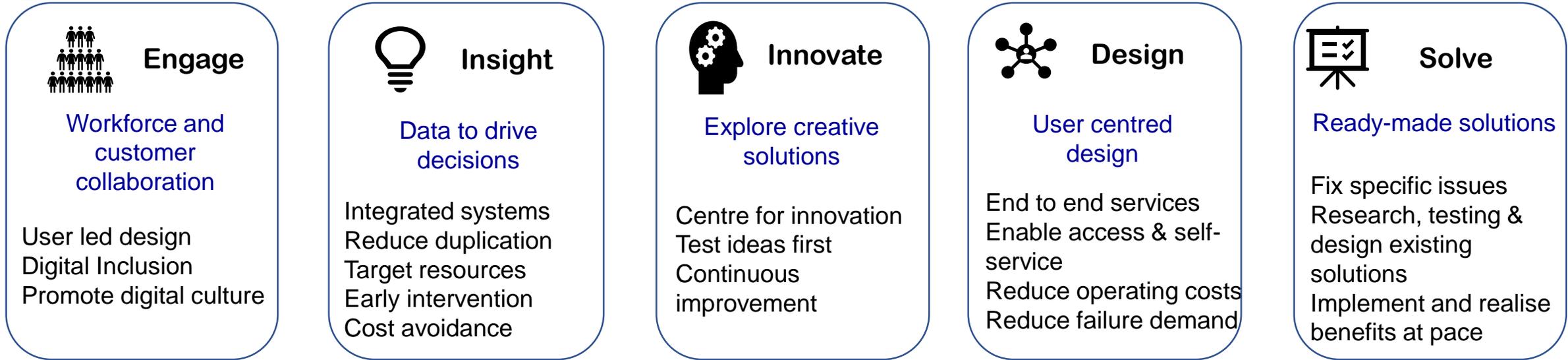
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Scrutiny Board One

07/07/2021



Digital First Workstreams



Three key areas of delivery:

Residents

Workforce

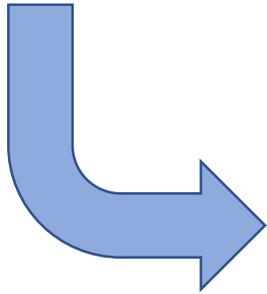
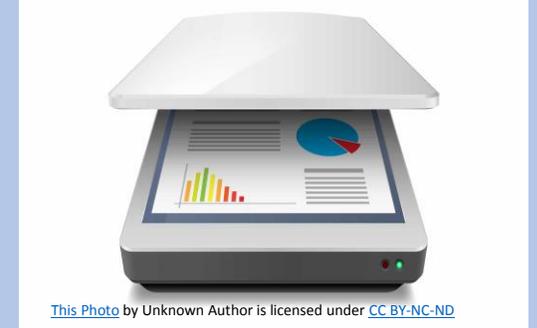
Elected Members

Digital delivery for Residents

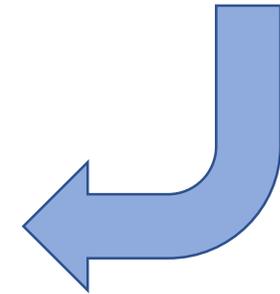


Web Chat – Live online chat with Council Officers to provide resident support and guidance with accessing Council Services. Over 36,000 contacts in last 12 months

Digital Scanning – New options available for residents to provide documents to support service requests including: uploading online, posting or using self-serve facilities.

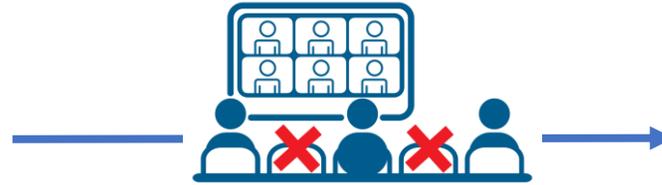


- **Improved resident experience – quicker response/result**
- **Free to use channel**
- **Reduced face to face contact**
- **Less staff time collecting documents**

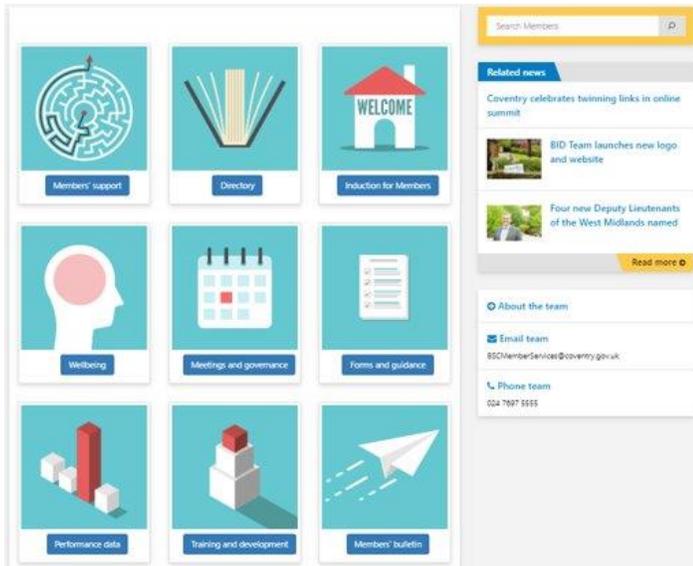


Digital delivery for Workforce & Members

Hybrid Meeting rooms (phase 1) –
Technology installed in Council Chamber, Committee Room 3 and M.1 In Friargate to facilitate Hybrid meetings. Phase 2 during July/Aug



- Enable ongoing agile working
- Reduce unnecessary travel time
- Workforce based in best location to meet resident needs.



Elected Member's Intranet pages –
Pages refreshed with more visual look and feel. Set as Homepage for Members. Further work planned to refine content – feedback survey sent to members to inform ongoing improvement

- Quick to access and easier to navigate
- Members support accessible in one place





Remote Monitoring – working in partnership with health teams to implement technology in care homes/communities to support people to access remote care



Reduced admissions to hospital and reduced care professional call outs
Implementation commenced in March 2021



Partnership data sharing – High risk resident data sharing collaboration between social care, primary care and UHCW



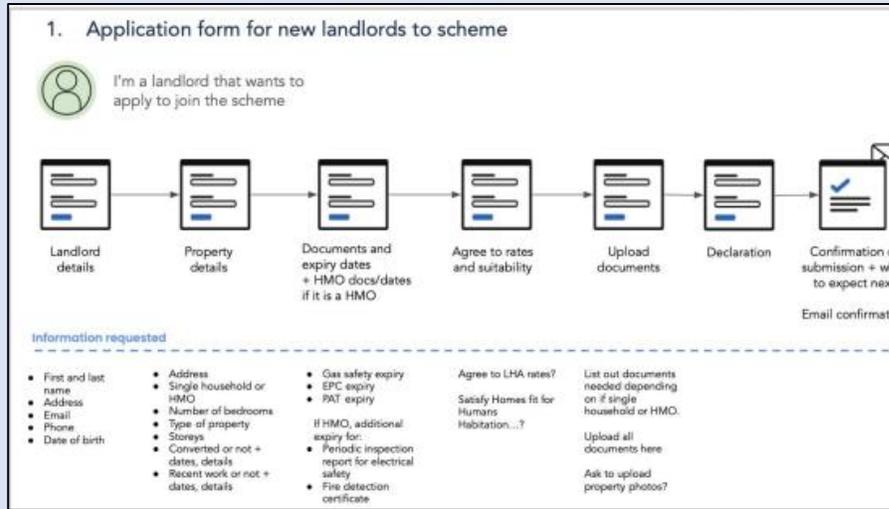
Pop up vaccination clinic established in low vaccine take up, high risk community area, 115 residents vaccinated in a single day



Housing Service Design Advice & Self-Service



Digital Let's Rent
New web content, digital form and processes to improve application experience for landlords



User centred website content
Designed around residents life events with practical advice and self-service options matched to their situation

Homelessness advice

My landlord wants to evict me

It can be very worrying if your landlord has asked you to leave your home. We want to make it as easy as possible for you to access the help that you need.

How have you been asked to leave your home?

My landlord has asked me to leave verbally

In most cases, your landlord will need to serve you a formal written notice to end your tenancy. This can vary, depending on your tenancy agreement.

If your landlord is asking you to leave without serving a notice, your landlord may be trying to evict you illegally.

Housing options video and quiz

Interactive self-service tools to manage resident expectations and understand their housing options

Coventry Housing Quiz

Coventry City Council

How many households in Coventry are currently waiting on Coventry Homefinder?

A) Less than 7,000

B) Less than 10,000

C) More than 12,000

Powered by SurveyMonkey

Coventry City Council
Housing and Homelessness Service

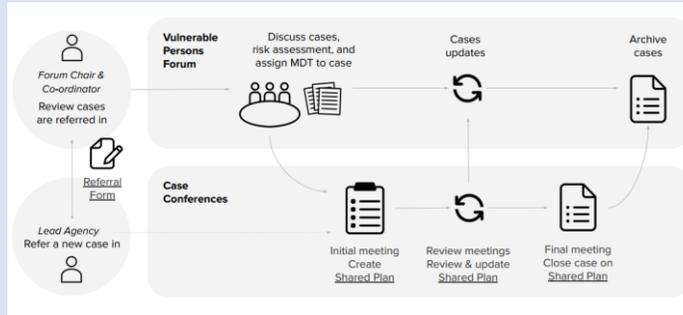
What to expect from the Council during your search for a settled home

- Skills transfer in service design methodology, both in transformation and service
- Prototyping and testing with residents and landlords has given confidence these address defined problem and user needs.
- Full impact will be measured over coming weeks and months through changes to resident and landlord behaviours



Teams built around people

New process and tools implemented. Promoting collaborative working, efficiency and accountability at the Vulnerable People's Forum.



Conversational assessment

Principles for a more informal initial assessment to build trust and engagement. Supporting a more strength based service.

Empathy	Transparency	Flexibility
Walk in their shoes	Explain the process	Ask for expert help if needed
Build trust	Let them know that they are in a non-judgemental environment	Take your time
Use a simple and informal language	Work with other teams in a collaborative way	Let the customer tell their story in their own words
Tailor the conversation based on the customer and their emotional status	Put support in place if needed	Ask more specific questions at the end of the assessment

Move on officer

Trialled a new role focussed on supporting residents in TA to move to settled accommodation. Closing 57 cases in 3 months.



- **Work built on existing service improvements**
- **Working in collaborative way with strict timeframe, meant the team could effectively prioritise and deliver achievable objectives**
- **Staff in service were engaged throughout, testing products and through show and tells. This increased buy in to the change and the management team itself**
- **Use of testing approach has ensured quality, but with quick deployment of solutions**

Planning



- Interim Planning Portal is planned to go live on 1st July 2021.
- Project to migrate to Idox Cloud solution is mobilising.
- Anticipated that project will take 8 months to complete.



Our Digital Infrastructure



Full Fibre Nationally: Ranked 3rd out of 379
(up from 5th in December 2020)

laura_name	Jan-21	All Matched Premises	Rank Mar	% Change FF
Kingston upon Hull, City of	97.5	128817	1	0
Milton Keynes	86.3	122065	2	3
Coventry	75.5	148637	3	8.3
Ards and North Down	74.1	72718	4	5.5
Belfast	73.3	166868	5	3
Mid and East Antrim	68.7	61571	6	10.5
Antrim and Newtownabbey	67.2	61030	7	3.9
Epsom and Ewell	67	33273	8	6.8
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	65.8	86229	9	8.6
Lisburn and Castlereagh	64.3	60778	10	8
Exeter	62.3	58334	11	-0.1
Peterborough	59.4	92153	12	12.3
York	58.2	96063	13	3.4
Salford	56.4	128988	14	-0.1
Westminster	56.2	164465	15	0.1
East Riding of Yorkshire	55.5	166380	16	7.1
Derry City and Strabane	54.1	62612	17	1
Newry, Mourne and Down	54	70662	18	20.6
Thanet	52.8	73160	19	3.7
Worthing	52.1	51710	20	18.5

UK average coverage for full fibre is 21% - Coventry is 75.5%

Combined Fixed Line Coverage Nationally: Ranked 3rd out of 379
(up from 4th in December 2020)

laura_name	Jan-21					
	FF	Gbit	SFBB	UFBB	Average	Rank
Kingston upon Hull, City of	97.5	97.5	98.5	97.5	97.8	1
Milton Keynes	86.3	86.3	97.9	88.4	89.7	2
Coventry	75.5	91.3	97.8	91.4	89.0	3
Belfast	73.3	91	97.5	91.4	88.3	4
Barking and Dagenham	51.8	89.8	98.7	89.9	82.6	5
Epsom and Ewell	67	67.1	99.5	88.7	80.6	6
Ards and North Down	74.1	75.8	94.9	75.8	80.2	7
Salford	56.4	81.8	95.5	82.5	79.1	8
Antrim and Newtownabbey	67.2	78.4	91.4	78.5	78.9	9
Leeds	48.5	81.7	96.5	84.8	77.9	10
Birmingham	37	88.6	95.6	90.1	77.8	11
Lisburn and Castlereagh	64.3	77	92.8	77	77.8	12
Cardiff	45.2	81.6	97.5	85.9	77.6	13
Exeter	62.3	62.3	95.8	87	76.9	14
City of Edinburgh	40.6	82.7	97.5	86	76.7	15
Merton	30.9	86.8	98.2	88.5	76.1	16
Camden	31	87.1	95.9	88.8	75.7	17
Solihull	29.3	86.2	97.2	87.7	75.1	18
Peterborough	59.4	59.4	98	82.5	74.8	19
Worthing	52.1	52.1	99.3	92.9	74.1	20

UK average coverage for gigabit capable broadband is 37% - Coventry is 91.3%

Full Fibre WMCA: Ranked 1st out of 7

laura_name	Jan-21	All Matched Premise	Rank Jan 2021	% Change FF
Coventry	75.5	148637	3	8.3
Birmingham	37	474514	40	3.6
Solihull	29.3	97203	70	7.1
Walsall	11.3	118359	207	0.2
Sandwell	15	142189	163	3.8
Wolverhampton	5.8	117775	287	4
Dudley	2.8	147504	348	0.9

Year on Year (Mar 20 – Mar 21):
Coventry's Full Fibre position is the 7th most improved out of 379 (this is down from 4th most improved Dec – Dec):

laura_name	% increase
Epsom and Ewell	64
Worthing	49.7
Newry, Mourne and Down	47.3
Bromsgrove	36.3
Antrim and Newtownabbey	35.9
Milton Keynes	31.4
Coventry	30.2
Chelmsford	29.9
Peterborough	28.2
Doncaster	27.3
Mid Ulster	27.2
Vale of Glamorgan	26.6
Causeway Coast and Glens	26.5
East Ayrshire	25.9
East Devon	25.3
Mid and East Antrim	24.9
West Lothian	24.7
St Albans	24.5
Aberdeen City	23.7
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	23.6



Website Upgrade Q2 21/22 - Modern look and feel for improved resident experience, easier to find information and self-serve

Chatbot Pilot Q4 21/22 – Currently live in small scale, ongoing development for wider application. Deliver 24/7 self-service for residents

Digital Inclusion 21/22 - Dedicated resource to bridge the Digital divide, improve employability, reduce deprivation, social isolation and inequality

Services for Schools 22/23 – New system and service standards. Meet needs of children and young people to improve education options. Protect school budgets while increasing CCC sales

New Customer Record Management System (CRM) Q2 – Q3 22/23 – Identify and procure new system. Once implemented will improve resident experience. Enable more join up between services and partners. Allowing us to engage with residents before they are in crisis, and identify commercial opportunities

Revenues and Benefits 21/22 – implement automation within system Robot Processing Automation (RPA). This will enable more transactions to be automated improving resident experience with quicker resolution

Hybrid Meeting room (phase 2) Aug 21 – Complete roll out:

- Friargate 6.1 to 11.1
- Council House Diamond rooms 5 & 6 and Committee Rooms 1 & 4
- Broadgate House Safeguarding rooms 2, 3,5, & 6
- Whitley Depot (new building) main conference rooms

Enable ongoing agile working. Reduce unnecessary travel time. Workforce based in best location to meet resident needs

New Room Booking system (soft launch) July 21 –

Enable rooms to be booked more easily. Provide employees with live view of available touch down spaces to meet needs of a more agile workforce

Digital Dictation Sep 21 – Launch in Adult Social Care and for HR casework meetings. Less employee time writing notes and more time supporting residents/workforce. Higher accuracy

Members Casework system Q4 21/22 – Implement digital casework system. To make management of casework easier for Elected Members and members Support. Insight from casework data to identify trends and inform decision making



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Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board 1

Date: 7th July 2021

Subject: Customer Services

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide an insight into Customer Services through the pandemic; the additional activity that has been and continues to be undertaken and the business as usual performance during that time.
- 1.2 To highlight the learning that has been taken from these recent months and to demonstrate how that will be used to continue to evolve the service on behalf of the residents of Coventry.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board 1 is recommended to:
 - 1) Consider the content of the presentation attached at Appendix 1
 - 2) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member
 - 3) Identify any areas the Board would like to consider in more detail at a future meeting

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 Customer Services supports the delivery of support and advice through a number of telephone-based teams, face to face outlets and other digital channels. Alongside that it has responsibility for the provision of organisational support through administration, Executive Support and Digital Print and Mail.
- 3.2 Like many service areas the pandemic necessitated a fundamental change in the way that all of these services work to continue to enable customers to access service provision and support the organisation in the provision of core functionality.
- 3.3 While much of the business as usual activity was retained during this time, the service undertook more of an enabling role working with colleagues across the organisation and beyond to achieve positive outcomes for the residents of the City. The learning from this has helped to shape the future role of the service as outlined in the accompanying presentation in Appendix 1.

Name: Adrienne Bellingeri
Position: Head of Customer Services
Contact details: 024 7697 1045

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CUSTOMER SERVICE

FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES SCRUTINY BOARD – 7TH July 2021



LOOKING BACK

CUSTOMER SERVICE

DURING THE LAST YEAR



resident

- Set up the Community Support in response to the pandemic to offer help to Coventry residents. Expanded to pick up Winter Grant and Local Support Grant and working with partners to deliver solutions
- Undertook self and well checks on 3104 vulnerable people including phone calls and visits to residents properties working with the Police. Redeployed people from across the organisation to support



channel

- Remained open to support vulnerable people or those unable to access services any other way
- Supported other services to use face to face when needed
- Introduced webchat as a free way to contact us
- Remained open throughout to collect and deliver post (prioritising vulnerable people and income generation) and food parcels to the most vulnerable



digital

- Introduced new technology so contact centre was able to work from home in readiness for lockdown announcement
- Used video conferencing for Council Tax court cases
- Completed the roll out of scanning of incoming post across the organisation
- Introduced remote printing across the organisation to maintain postal services



people

- Deployed to register deaths
- Supported administration for the Coroner
- Delivered food parcels in and out of hours
- Delivered PPE
- Provided support working out of UCHW
- Moved between teams within the service to support phones, Community support etc.
- Supported other services with new ways of working e.g. Elections and Canvassing calling out of hours
- Opened during bank holidays for contact and food delivery



analysis

- Undertook analysis of Community Support use to identify gaps in provision and research potential providers
- Undertook analysis to obtain funds and fulfil DWP requirements under Winter Grant and Local Support Grant



activity

- Managed PPE stocks for the organisation
- Delivered equipment to employees across the city to enable home working
- Created a pharmacy register to publish on the website
- Working with partners to support the Prevention of Evictions activity
- Created new partnerships to meet demand e.g. Act on Energy, Red Cross, Severn Trent Water etc.
- Printed COVID material (posters, stickers etc.)
- Undertook one off mailing exercises to reach vulnerable residents

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Vulnerable people contact

Completed telephone contact	Totals
Total households contacted	2135
Total telephone contacts made	2890
Average telephone contact attempts per household	1.35
Total people requiring support	158
% of households requiring support	7%
Completed door knocking	Totals
Total households 'knocked'	969
Total 'knocks' made	1169
Average contact attempts per household	1.21
Total attempts to contact through neighbours	181
Total people requiring support following door knocking	38
% of households requiring support	4%
Telephone contact attempts made before door knocking	2407
Average contact attempts per household	2.48
Escalated to Police	37
Outcome - safe	12
Outcome - not known	25
Totals	
Customers contacted and completed	3104
Telephone contacts made	5297
Deceased	134
Moved property	21
Required support	196
Required support %	6%

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Overview of Enquiries

April 20-May 21



425 signed up for shielding

369 referred for Community Support Grant





1,453 self-serve applications

2,506 people helped at the point of contact with no further support needs





2,708 webchat

12,705 contacts

9,997 telephone





814 law centre referrals



349 people provided advice on medicine and social support



102 people referred for safeguarding concerns

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signposting

- Furniture
- Transport
- Baby supplies
- Mental health worries
- Availability of computers, phones & data
- Support for pets
- Healthcare concerns

WINTER & LOCAL SUPPORT GRANT

Working with schools and the food network



585 helped with fuel



128 shoes & clothes

53,607 supported with free school meals



4,729 warm clothing help through schools





82 white goods

26 toiletries



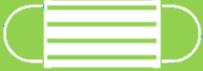
Food

- 1,990 food network parcels
- 623 food bank parcels
- 127 collected from/delivered by Digital Mail & Print
- 299 collected from the Customer Service Centre
- 40 out of hours deliveries



PPE

Through Digital Print & Mail



Over 336,000 masks

Over 25,000 goggles and visors





Over 1000 litres of hand sanitiser



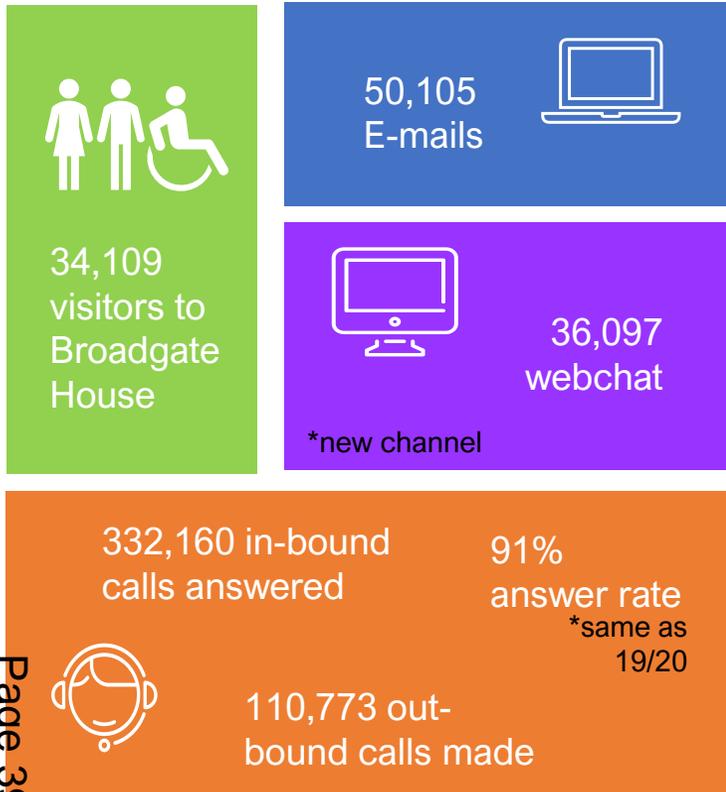
Over 1,000,000 gloves

PERFORMANCE

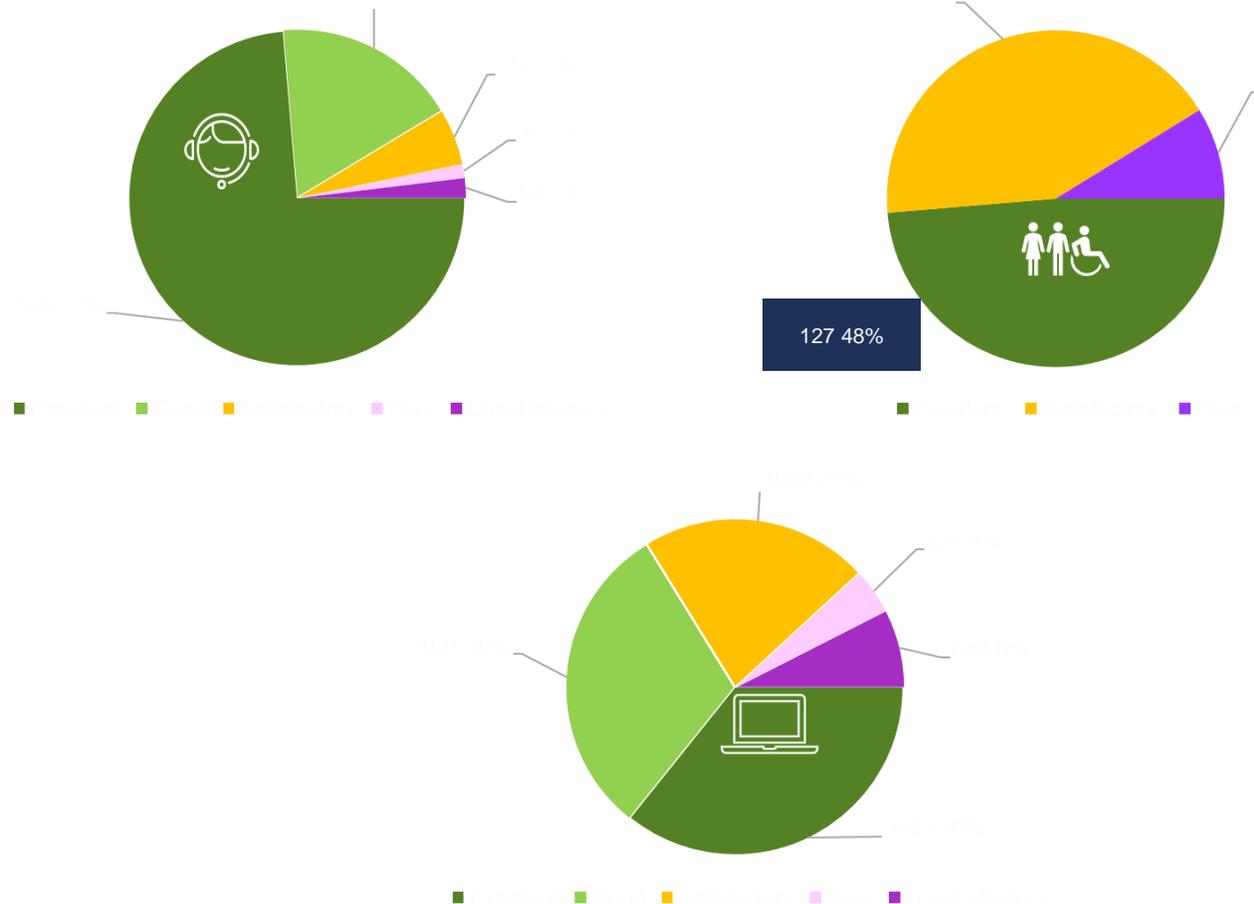
CUSTOMER SERVICE

HEADLINES FROM THE LAST YEAR

CUSTOMER CONTACT



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION



CUSTOMER SERVICE

MORE DETAIL

IMPROVEMENTS



Introduced a booking confirmation email and added the next available appointment feature to the on-line offer for Pest Control



Added a new feature allowing residents to upload documents to provide more details to support their Council Tax enquiry



Continue to support Registrars and work with Web-development on improvements to appointment system and birth certificates



Worked with Web-development to ensure that all on-line appointment booking processes to include next available appointment feature



POSITIVE COMMENTS & THEMES

- Keep the tip booking system in place after the pandemic: 'it is brilliant', 'very professional and easy to use'
- Responding efficiently to residents enquiries: 'Reported mattress being flytipped, what a super result it was collected next day, that's what I call service, thank you'
- Professional resident support provided across all channels: 'the customer service advisor had excellent, effective listening skills, great customer service, well done', 'the advisor on the desk was really helpful and offered a very quick service, she was excellent', 'rapid response to my concerns raised on-line, within 24 hours, very impressed'



NEED TO CONSIDER FURTHER

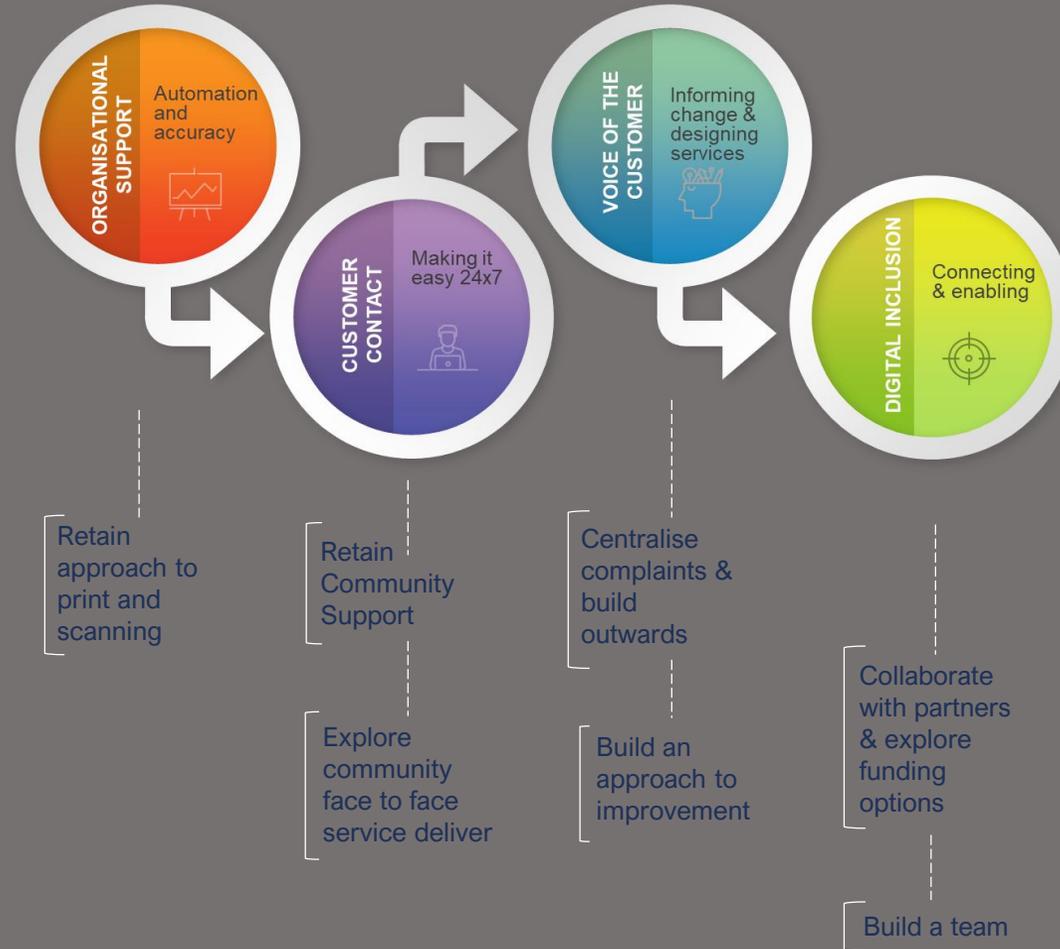
- Challenge finding a free appointment slot for booking a birth appointment – working with IT on potential solution
- Have to go through copy certificate process multiple times for Registrars if more than one certificate is required – service area looking into. Also reference to calling rather than going through the process on-line
- Dissatisfaction with missed bins

LOOKING FORWARD

CUSTOMER SERVICE

COVID LEARNING

STRUCTURING TO MEET NEED



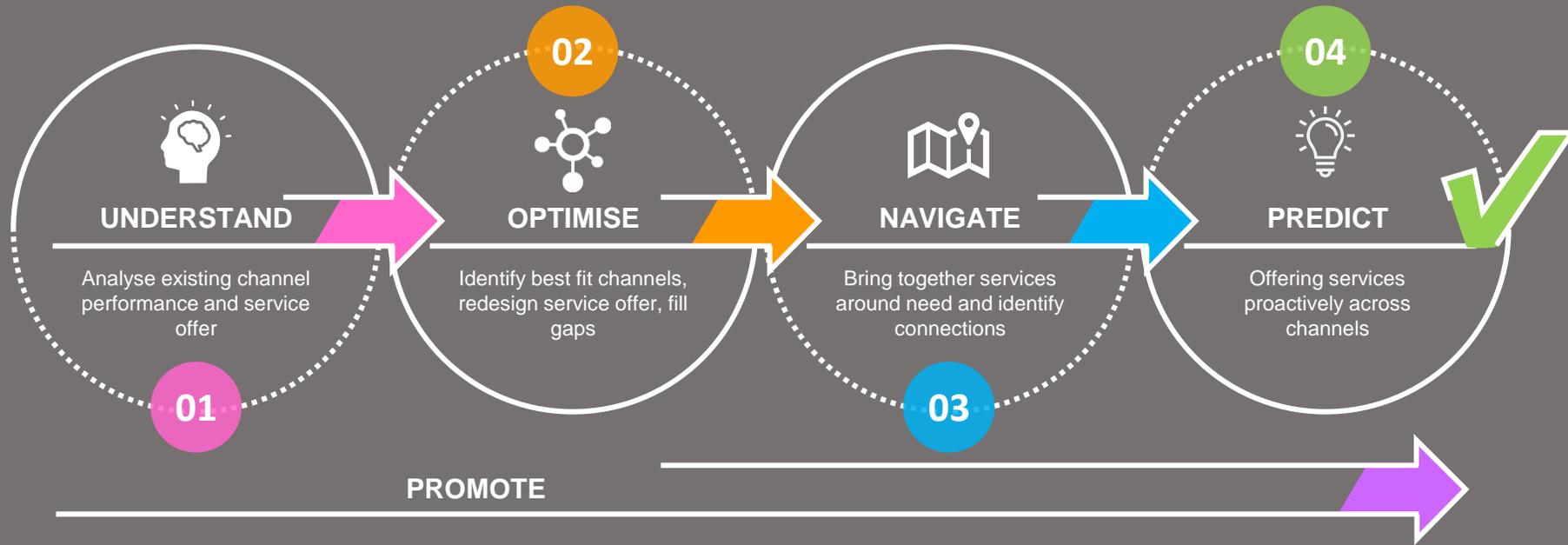
REVIEWING SERVICES, PROCESSES & SKILLS

MAINTAINING THE APPROACH:

Start small, experiment, learn & evolve from; resident feedback, partner engagement, analysis & benchmarking

COVENTRY CONNECTS

FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE



TO BE CONSIDERED FOR EACH ELEMENT



resident

what will be different & how we'll support adoption



channel

what's the right channel for each service and how we'll evolve our offer



digital

what equipment, software and skills are needed to implement change



people

what skills do our teams need to make this a success & do our structures need to change



analysis

what learning can we take from the data and insights into customer activity



activity

what opportunity is there to redesign end-to-end and digitise

COVENTRY CONNECTS

ACTIVITY UNDERWAY



resident

- Digital Service & Inclusion Lead being evaluated
- Recruiting graduate to support Digital Inclusion agenda
- Bid to innovation for resource to create Digital Inclusion team and train face to face people in delivering digital skills



channel

- Survey to understand why people use face to face channels
- Contact Us changing from e-mail to structured form to simplify completion
- Working with colleagues in web team to redesign the site
- Video conferencing in face to face setting



digital

- Piloting Chatbot, updating with supplier based on learning
- Exploring CRM options for the future
- Review Community Support internet presence with partners around themes
- Developing bins chase up process for missed bins that continue not to be collected



people

- Preparing to consult make Community Support permanent and engaging with Benefits to transfer funding for fuel
- Working with partners to explore community based opportunity at Moat House
- Introducing pilot role for face to face service delivery
- Implementing call overflows to administrative areas



analysis

- Reviewing all CRM processes to understand common elements (booking, paying etc.), frequency of use etc.
- Analysing data from Community Support to continue to build referral routes and support service delivery around individual needs
- Reviewing feedback to improve Executive Support function



activity

- Introducing web interface for Digital Print & Mail to support more commercial offer
- Restructuring to introduce more strategic approach to developing the service; inclusion, Voice of the Customer etc.
- Working with partners around themes - currently preventing evictions
- Bringing payslip printing (CCC initially then other payroll contracts) in-house from Ricoh

Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

7th July 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Digital Update- Customer Services
15th September 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reserves Update
13th October 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Medium Term Financial Strategy
1st December 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Financial Impact of COVID-19
26th January 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Financial Management Code
30th March 2021
-
2021/2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Social Value and Sustainability Policy- Procurement Strategy- HR Update- New Ways of Working- ICT Infrastructure Resilience

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
7th July 2021	- Digital Update	To provide the Board with the opportunity to scrutinise the work being done on Digital.	Cllr Brown/ Cllr Hetherton/ Cllr Lloyd/ David Ashmore
	- Customer Services	To provide an update the performance of customer service, including the impact of COVID-19 on service delivery.	Cllr Brown/ David Ashmore
15th September 2021	- Reserves Update	To receive an update on the position of Council Reserves and identify recommendations for the Cabinet Member.	Cllr Brown/ Paul Jennings
13th October 2021	- Medium Term Financial Strategy	To discuss the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy prior to its approval through the political process. Please note the date of the meeting will move to enable SB1 to consider the MTFS before it goes to Cabinet. Normal reporting timescales have changed due to Covid-19.	Cllr Brown /Barry Hastie/ Paul Jennings
1st December 2021	- Financial Impact of COVID-19	To receive an update on the item first taken in October 2020 regarding the financial impact of COVID-19.	Cllr Brown/ Barrie Hastie/ Paul Jennings
26th January 2021	- Financial Management Code	The Financial Management Code (FM Code) provides guidance for good and sustainable financial management in local authorities. By complying with the principles and standards within the code authorities will be able to demonstrate their financial sustainability. This item will examine Coventry's progress towards meeting the FM Code principles.	Cllr Brown/ Barrie Hastie/ Paul Jennings
30th March 2021	-		
2021/2022	- Social Value and Sustainability Policy	Following the meeting on 4 th July, it was agreed to review the Social Value Policy. The new policy will be brought to SB1 for scrutiny.	Cllr Brown / Mick Burn
	- Procurement Strategy	The Procurement Strategy is being revised and this meeting will enable SB1 to input into its development before it is agreed by Cabinet/ Council.	Cllr Brown/ Mick Burn

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	- HR Update	To include the implementation of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, One Coventry Values and an update on the People Plan.	Cllr Brown/ Sue Newing
	- New Ways of Working	To consider new ways of working at CCC following acceleration of the programme post Covid-19. Customer Service Directorate, Children's Services and a range of directorates. Including training and development.	Cllr Brown/ Cllr Hetherton / Susanna Newing
	- ICT Infrastructure Resilience	This report will include information on Information Risk Management, Disaster Recovery, system reliability and ICT Security provision- linked to Gartner's report.	Cllr Brown/ Cllr Hetherton/ Cllr Lloyd/ David Ashmore

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