
Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1)
Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources)

13 January 2014
20 January 2014

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member (Strategic Finance and Resources) – Councillor Gannon

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director, Resources

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Customer Journey – Vision and Strategy

Is this a key decision?

No. Although the matter within the Report can affect all wards in the City, it is not anticipated that the impact will be significant and it is therefore not deemed to be a key decision.

Executive Summary:

In June 2013 Full Council approved the Council rationalising its operational estate to start the Friargate business district in the City, with the aim of regenerating the City, transforming the Council and delivering savings. At the heart of this programme and at the heart of the Council is the simple purpose that the Council are here to serve the needs of local people. The Council agreed as part of this programme of change to rationalise its customer facing city centre based reception points into a single Customer Services Centre (CSC) in the Council owned Broadgate House in the City Centre by 2015. This report reconfirms the vision and strategy for the way the Council delivers customer services which will underpin the changes we will make leading up to the CSC opening and beyond. The programme to deliver the changes to customer facing property, ICT and the Council's ways of working is called Customer Journey and this covers every aspect of the Council's interactions with the people of Coventry.

The way many citizens wish to interact with the Council has changed (aligned to the way they interact with their bank, airline, etc.) and the Council needs to respond to this need.

Combined with this, the significant financial pressures facing the Council mean that more than ever we need to ensure that our services are as efficient as possible. We need to focus on the practical aspects of good customer service – how people want to contact us, how we can make this simpler and more cost effective and how we can use technology better to benefit everyone. As part of our planned move to Friargate, we are investing in the way we deliver customer services to improve them, with the overall aim of regenerating the City and transforming the

services the Council provides and delivering savings so we can continue to provide services to the most vulnerable.

Recommendations

Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) is recommended to:

- (1) Consider the content of the report, and forward any comments or recommendations to Cabinet Member.
- (2) Identify any issues for inclusion in the scrutiny work programme.

The Cabinet Member is recommended to:

- (3) Consider any comments or recommendations put forward by Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board.
- (4) To endorse the Vision and Strategy for the Customer Journey programme, reaffirming the principles within the Council's existing customer services strategy.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1: Buildings directly affected by kickstart programme (some with public reception points)

Appendix 2: Customer Journey Infographic

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

Yes – Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board (1) – 13 January 2013

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

Yes – the decision to rationalise operational property and invest in a single Customer Services Centre in Broadgate House was approved by Full Council on 25 June 2013 “Starting the Friargate Business District to Regenerate the City, Transform the Council and Deliver Savings.”

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Customer Journey – Vision and Strategy

1. Context

- 1.1 In June 2013 Full Council approved the Council rationalising its operational estate to start the Friargate business district in the City, with the aim of regenerating the City, transforming the Council and delivering savings. At the heart of this programme and at the heart of the Council is the simple purpose that the Council are here to serve the needs of local people. The Council agreed as part of this programme of change to rationalise its customer facing city centre based reception points into a single Customer Services Centre (CSC) in the Council owned Broadgate House in the City Centre by 2015. This report reconfirms the vision and strategy for the way the Council delivers customer services which will underpin the changes we will make leading up to the CSC opening and beyond. The programme to deliver the changes to customer facing property, ICT and the Council's ways of working is called Customer Journey and this covers every aspect of the Council's interactions with the people of Coventry.
- 1.2 Increasingly, residents in Coventry are now able to interact with businesses such as banks and airlines 24 hours a day, at times convenient to them and from a variety of locations and devices. Often they are able to receive an immediate resolution to their query or booking. In light of these developments, the Council will respond to residents' expectations of convenient, rapid and responsive service.
- 1.3 Combined with this, the significant financial pressures facing the Council mean that more than ever we need to ensure that our services are as efficient as possible. We need to focus on the practical aspects of good customer service – how people want to contact us, how we can make this simpler and more cost effective and how we can use technology better to benefit everyone. As part of our planned move to Friargate, we are investing in the way we deliver customer services to improve them, with the overall aim of regenerating the City and transforming the services the Council provides.
- 1.4 The Council deals with a complex set of issues from cleaning the streets, maintaining street lights, cutting the grass in parks, to providing support and care to vulnerable children or adults, administering housing benefits and working with the private sector to regenerate and bring new life to the City.
- 1.5 Every day thousands of our employees have some kind of contact with our citizens. Sometimes this is face to face, sometimes it's over the phone and sometimes it's through the internet. In 2010 we established a customer services strategy through the abc programme, which set out how we will improve our services for citizens. A task and finish Scrutiny board (Customer, Communities, Finance and Workforce) helped shape the strategy and considered it on 24 March 2010. The Cabinet Member for Corporate and Neighbourhood Services formally approved the strategy on 17 June 2010.
- 1.6 The Customer Journey programme will now move forward to implement these principles which many other Councils across the country have already delivered - modernising and improving the experience that our customers have when they deal with the Council.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

The vision for customer

- 2.1 The vision for Customer Journey is "Local people and their needs are at the heart of the Customer Journey".

Doing nothing is not an option

- 2.2 The changes to the Council's operational estate and the rationalisation of reception points (see Appendix 1) has already been approved as part of the June 2013 Council report. This will deliver the property changes necessary to achieve real improvements to the customer experience. The Council will need to change the way it delivers customer services as our resources decline.
- 2.3 The Council needs to make full use of modern technology and the ability and the desire of many of our residents to use this technology to improve the customer journey (for example through targeted use of our Adult Education resources to provide training to use technology) and our efficiency. This includes enabling more of our citizens to access services and information through our website on-line or through mobile devices. The Council also needs to maximise the use of its existing contact centre, so that more transactions are dealt with by the contact centre rather than with services directly with the aim that those calls are resolved more effectively at the first point of contact. This in turn will enable the Council to make best use of its diminishing resources so that we can continue to support the most vulnerable and the remaining demand for face to face contact.
- 2.4 At the moment the way we deliver customer services is not as consistent as it could be across the Council – that needs to change. We need to be clear about the standards that the Council will aim to meet, deliver those promises and learn from our mistakes so that we are continuously improving.

What will look different in Coventry as a result of the recommended option

- 2.5 Customer Journey is about defining how citizens can interact with the Council in the future. There is also the opportunity to co-design services with Coventry citizens to ensure that services improve and reflect the differing expectations and capabilities of the people of Coventry. The Council will develop a detailed channel strategy that addresses how the Council will ensure services are available through the right channel for the person and the service (e.g. web, telephone, text, mail, or in person).
- 2.6 Customers will be able to report, pay and apply for many more Council services on line, making it more convenient for the customer and more cost effective for Council taxpayers. We will aim to increase the number of transactions done on line to achieve the average levels that other Councils are achieving. At the moment the Council does about 1% of its business on line, compared with an average of 50% in other Councils. We will utilise technology to actively encourage self-service and reduce demand for face to face (f2f) or telephony provision. We will work towards turning off channels by 2015, for example a reduction in reception points and fewer people paying by cash and cheque.
- 2.7 The existing contact centre needs to be developed and improved to deal with more of the phone calls that the Council receives. For the customer this will mean a more consistent service by telephone and more effective resolution of queries. To do this we will need to redesign our end to end processes.
- 2.8 For more complex queries, the Council will continue to provide f2f services where necessary. A Customer Services Centre for f2f, self-service and telephone services on floor 1 of Broadgate House will be delivered by September 2015. Floor 2 of Broadgate House will be utilised for other customer f2f contact including safeguarding conferences. The CSC will drive city centre footfall and will be the focus of f2f and self-service customer services for the Council including access to online and telephony services and paying in machines. This will make it clearer to our customers where they need to go to access f2f services and many of these are likely to be on an appointment basis.

2.9 The Council is also undertaking a Strategic Property Review under its **abc** programme. The Council will need to rationalise its suburban customer facing property locations over the coming years to deliver savings and this is likely to involve closer working with partners in the City to share accommodation too. This will be the subject of future reports as it will mean changes to the way the Council delivers services and may offer opportunities for improving the customer services in neighbourhoods. The Customer Journey programme will support the principles of property rationalisation by enabling residents to do more business with the Council on line and investing in an improved centrally located CSC for the reduced numbers of f2f contacts.

2.10 The Council will be using its transformation programme to embed the following principles for Customer Journey:

Share property, data, knowledge and values to get things done for customers.

Responsible, Accountable staff who focus on getting results through behaviours – developing a customer services culture across the Council

Everyone Matters in delivering a customer journey that reflects the differing aspirations and capabilities of local people freeing up Council resources to help the most vulnerable. Empowering customers to take advantage of new technology and influence service improvement.

Simplify the customer journey using new technology, cost effective access routes, communications and processes to enable customers to change behaviours and do more to help themselves

Flexible and Adaptable services that manage and reduce customer demand using customer insight. Flexing the way we provide services in response.

Improve services in order to meet our promises to deliver quality customer services on time. Learn from our mistakes.

2.11 We will also use our contacts with customers and partner organisations as an opportunity to promote and deliver other Council priorities and services, for example public health opportunities.

2.12 The Council is aspiring to deliver services which genuinely reflect the needs of its customers, which are designed in ways which our customers want, are accessible and delivered to the standards our customers expect. The information about our customers will be used to better understand their needs, wants, expectations, behaviours and experiences and the active use of this understanding then used to inform the design and delivery of services that also better meet customers' need. To become a truly customer-focused or customer-centric organisation, this insight needs to be embedded across all aspects of the organisation, from planning and decision-making to the delivery of front-line services.

2.13 As part of the implementation of Customer Journey, the Council will design simple measures to ensure that the success of the programme is understood and can be measured. This will include customer satisfaction, targets for reducing demand for channels and savings.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 A key part of the Customer Journey programme will include active informing, consultation with and involvement of residents in redesigning services.

- 3.2 The programme will require changes to the way that the Council works. Once the detail of these changes is designed consultation will be required with staff and Trades Unions in line with the Council's policies.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Work is already underway to design the Customer Services Centre. A high level plan for the implementation of the ICT changes, movement of transactions on line and into the contact centre will be in place by the end of January 2014. This will then be worked up in more detail. There are also a wider set of changes to improve and develop all aspects of customer services. These changes will then be implemented over the period up to the opening of the CSC in 2015 and beyond.

5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

- 5.1.1 Capital investment of £1million to achieve the refurbishment of the Customer Services Centre at Broadgate House was included in the June 2013 report to Council. The ICT capital programme includes an allocation of c£2m to put in place the necessary ICT changes to achieve the Customer Journey vision including changes to the website and infrastructure. This programme will need to be prioritised and developed and the revenue implications understood.
- 5.1.2 By routing customers through appropriate access channels and by providing more cost effective and accessible options the Council should also see a reduction in avoidable contact and an improvement in customer satisfaction levels. Efficiencies are predicated based on a shift in customer behaviour from using expensive forms of contact such as f2f and telephone (direct with service area) to more efficient forms of contact such as the web. Achieving this channel shift is highly dependent upon improved functionality and use of technology. However, once the channels are available the focus will turn to raising awareness with customers. By understanding different groups of customers it will make it possible to market services more effectively, such as being able to encourage take-up of services or different channels by particular groups. Research shows that the average cost of a face-to-face transaction is £7.90 whilst a telephone transaction is £2.40 and self-service is 32p.
- 5.1.3 The Customer Journey programme will support the delivery of savings as part of the Council's business case for the wider Friargate transformation within the June 2013 Council report. There is the potential for the programme to deliver significant savings to support the Council's medium term financial strategy and the financial challenges over the coming two to three years.

- 5.2 Legal implications
None

6. Other implications

- 6.1 **How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

- 6.1.1 Customer Journey is an essential part of the Council's corporate plan and the priority to be Locally Committed. The programme will mean the Council using its assets more effectively and reducing operating costs. It means putting local people and their needs at the heart of the customer journey. It contributes to aim of having active citizens, strong and involved communities.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

- 6.2.1 The Customer Journey programme team and Kickstart Board are actively monitoring and managing key risks across the programme.
- 6.2.2 The main risks that are being managed include – achieving the property changes on time and on budget, ensuring the technology delivers the programme requirements to time and budget, changing behaviours of staff and customers in order to achieve channel shift, ensuring all Council services to work together to achieve the programme objectives and delivery of savings.
- 6.2.3 The risk of doing nothing is that customer services will not meet the needs of our customers into the future and will not be affordable.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

- 6.3.1 The Council has already embarked on its programme to kickstart the regeneration of the City through the move to Friargate. Customer Journey forms part of this programme which will have a significant impact overall on the Council. Customer Journey will mean changes to the Council's customer facing property, new ICT systems and changes to the way that Council staff work with and for customers.
- 6.3.2 The Council will need to change the processes that it currently undertakes in the front office and in service areas in order to achieve the Customer Journey vision. This will mean simplifying the way we do things and designing processes from a customer point of view.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

- 6.4.1 The Customer Journey vision and strategy has no immediate and specific adverse impact on protected groups at this stage. However, as the programme is rolled out we will work closely with customers to ensure that the programme assesses the impact of any changes on customers, in particular the need to ensure we address any barriers to self-service that some customers may have. Our access channels will be accessible in the broadest sense.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

- 6.5.1 None

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

- 6.6.1 The Customer Journey programme will provide opportunities for joining up information provision across partner organisations on-line and sharing customer insight. There may also be the opportunity to co-locate face to face services with other partners to deliver and improve service for customers.

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This report is published on the council's website:

www.coventry.gov.uk/councilmeetings

Appendix 1: Buildings directly affected by kickstart programme (some with public reception points)

Current

- Broadgate House (environmental health, safeguarding conferences)
- Civic Centres 1(school admissions, general enquiries) 2, 3 & 4 (planning and building control)
- Christchurch House/Spire House (Housing Benefits, housing options, Youth Offending Service)
- Harp Place (Adult Education)
- Eburne Adult Education Centre
- Elm Bank Corporate Training Centre
- Council House (general enquiries, Cashiers, Elections, Records & Land Charges, Council Tax & Business Rates)
- Coundon Family Centre
- 257 Stretton Avenue
- 312 Charter Avenue
- Moat House Neighbourhood & Leisure Centre

There are also a number of other customer facing buildings within the Council's property estate.

Future

- Single Front Door for Customers - Customer Service Centre – Broadgate House
- A range of other buildings including 4 Suburban Offices (Charter, Coundon, Stretton & Moat House) and out of city centre operational buildings.

Customer Journey Infographic

