



**REPORT TO:** Corporate and Customer Services  
Portfolio Holder  
**LEAD OFFICER:** Sonia Constant

9 November 2017

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## BIEP Digital by Default project update November 2017

### Purpose

1. To provide an update on the Digital by Default project, what it has achieved and to give an insight on how we have helped deliver better customer service.

### Recommendations

2. It is a recommendation for the Portfolio Holder to note and report the progress made to advance our digital services for customers.

### Reasons for Recommendations

3. The Digital by Default project was committed to improving our services for customers and empowering staff to be active advocates of digital. We achieved this by removing barriers and improving access to our services. This is in line with South Cambridgeshire's status as an outstanding place in which to live and work. Our ambition is to be innovative and provide the choice of accessing services online wherever possible. The Digital by Default project has set some firm foundations to continually improve our services.

### Background

4. The Digital by Default project set out to achieve improved customer access to our services by offering online eForms and improving the online experience. It also looked at back office functions such as the intranet and how we can help focus officer time on in-depth tasks.
5. The project achieved these by:
  - Offering a suite of fully functional self-service eForms that are used over 3,000 times a month.
  - A complete overhaul of the website that introduced familiar icons and a clear structure.
  - Adapting the procurement process to ensure a requirement to work with our corporate eForm software is in place. This means that we can link our eForms to back office systems in the future.
  - Creating a fully digital Benefits form that demonstrates the possibilities with linking to back office systems: We removed the need to send out a 72-page application to customers by creating a digital version. This transformed the processing time, reduced the submission of incomplete or incorrect details and allowed officers to work more efficiently. It tells the customer what evidence they need to provide when they have submitted their form. It is fully integrated into the back-office system. This reduced the processing time down

by 18 days. The eForm is updated by the Benefits team and our eForm supplier.

- Creating a consultation and jobs page whereby customers and staff can quickly find consultations and jobs on our website.
- Changing the Contact centre processes and messages to encourage residents to our website whenever possible. We have amended corporate letter templates to encourage a digital first contact from residents.
- Creating a Council Tax online self-service (due to go live early 2018)
- Creating an internal sickness eForm for staff has been created, it is ready for testing.
- Identifying a process to eliminate as many incomplete eForms as possible. The contact centre check with the resident to make sure they haven't already started a form.
- Re-writing the planning content on the website.
- Launching the new "what goes in which bin" pages to make this clearer for customers.
- Creating a new bin dates calendar that went live in February to coincide with bin round changes. You can also download the new bin dates to your device calendar.
- Changing the management of generic team mailboxes to the Contact centre. This will give residents a consistent response from staff and free up back office resource.

6. We measured these achievements using various methods: customer surveys to measure satisfaction with services before and after development work, evidence of a reduction in processing time for forms, time saved by officers not having to type up paper forms into back office systems, monitoring call patterns to the contract centre and efficiencies for staff, saving on postage costs and a large uptake of website/online forms usage.

### **Considerations**

7. There are several aspects that need to be considered with regard to attaining full digital services for our staff and customers:
- (i) To achieve fully digital services, we need to review the business processes and customer journey from the initial filling out of an eForm to the customer receiving confirmation that their request has been dealt with. This will require capable software and a process change for staff.
  - (ii) The new staff intranet, that will be accessible from anywhere on any device including access for Members, is currently being populated and created. It will be ready to test in the coming weeks and will be ready to use by the end of the year.
  - (iii) We have identified new technologies during this project that can offer our customers an excellent experience whilst visiting our website. These technologies need to be explored further to understand costs, timescales and benefits for both the customers and the Council. To progress the digital services that we can provide for the customer we could investigate the demand for a SCDC mobile app. We need to understand if customers would use this? What they would use this for? What the impact is on the Council on implementing this?

### **Consultation responses**

8. We utilised the consultation panel available to the Council for resident feedback. We ask for feedback on all web pages and eForms, this feedback is monitored daily. We also sent out a staff survey to gather information on our internal services. Discussions with third party suppliers and neighbouring local governments have also taken place to understand what is available digitally.

### **Effect on Strategic Aims**

#### **Aim 1 - An Innovative and Dynamic Organisation**

9. The aims of the Digital by Default project have been to provide innovative solutions to help reduce costs to the Council and provide the online digital services for customers.

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