

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Scrutiny & Overview Committee 4 November 2010
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CUSTOMER CONTACT STRATEGIC REVIEW

Purpose

1. To update the Committee regarding the Contact Centre Strategic Review and the expansion of this project to include all forms of customer contact.
2. To invite the Committee to influence this project at this and future meetings, or via a task and finish group.
3. The matter under scrutiny is key decision because:
 - i) it is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or making savings which are, significant.
 - ii) it is likely to significantly impact the way in which public access Council services.
 - iii) it is likely to raise new policy issues.

Options

4. The Committee may wish to
 - i) note this report, subject to any recommendations made at this meeting;
 - ii) ask for a further report(s) to a future meeting(s); or
 - iii) decide to establish a task and finish group to progress this review, based on the scoping document at Appendix 2.

Background

5. In May 2010 the Contact Centre Partnership Board recognised the need to review the Council's contract with Cambridgeshire County Council for the provision of a contact centre service. The contract will expire in December 2012 and a decision on any future service provision must be made in a timely manner, allowing a minimum of an 18 month lead time to implement.
6. In June 2010 Senior Management Team (SMT) approved a Contact Centre Strategic Review Project Initiation Document. This outlined a clear purpose:

'to identify for SMT and subsequently Member approval, by 31 March 2011, the option or options for continuing to provide direct operational 'first contact' services which will best serve the Council and community, having regard to an appropriate mix of customer service and value for money.'
7. At that time this Committee concluded that there was no scope for it to add any value to the review. However, early research into the performance of the Contact Centre contract identified immediate savings, as well as questions about probable changes

to the scale and types of services required. These findings were shared with the Chairman of this Committee who then asked for a report to this meeting.

Considerations

8. In September 2010 the Senior Policy and Performance Officer completed the Contact Centre Performance Review. This has been circulated separately to the Committee and is available on request. The purpose of the review was to assess the current arrangements between the Council and Cambridgeshire County Council for cost, contractual performance and customer satisfaction.
9. It was also agreed that this would provide an essential basis for challenge and comparison within the wider Contact Centre Strategic Review.
10. On examining the Contact Centre Performance Review, SMT came to the view that the project scope needed to be broadened to include all forms of customer contact; there was an apparent link between the reduction in phone calls and the increase in online transactions. The project initiation document (**Appendix 1**) was amended in accordance with this view and sets out the new purpose. The main changes have been highlighted in bold.

*'The strategic review seeks to identify for SMT and subsequently Member approval, by June 2011, **the option or options for providing an integrated, holistic customer contact framework / system** which will best serve the Council and community, having regard to an appropriate mix of customer service and value for money'.*

11. In light of the new scope the project team felt it appropriate to review all other customer access channels in a similar way. This piece of work is due to be completed by the end of November 2010.
12. It is the view of the project team that the Council could now be facing a wider set of options for meeting customer contact requirements and therefore involving Members from across the Council would strengthen the evaluation of those options.
13. For this reason, the Committee is asked to consider setting up a task and finish group based on the draft scoping document at **Appendix 2**.

Implications

14. Financial	The outcome of the Customer Contact Strategic Review is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or making savings which are, significant.
Legal	None specific at this stage.
Staffing	Staff are likely to be affected by the long-term outcomes of the review, particularly front line staff, and therefore should be kept apprised of progress and consulted appropriately.
Risk Management	A comprehensive list of associated risks can be found in Appendix 1 .
Equal Opportunities	All options for a holistic customer service framework / system will be subject to an equality impact assessment.
Climate Change	None specific at this stage.

Consultations

15. The Contact Centre Partnership Board received the project documentation and Contact Centre Performance Review in September 2010.

16. The Project Sponsor approved the new project documentation in September 2010.

Effect on Strategic Aims

17. The strategic review directly contributes to the Council's desire to provide first class services accessible to all, and demonstrates a clear commitment to the core Council values of customer service and service improvement.

Options

18. As detailed in paragraph four, the Committee may wish to:
- i) note this report, subject to any recommendations made at this meeting;
 - ii) ask for a further report(s) to a future meeting(s); and/or
 - iii) decide to establish a task and finish group to progress this review, based on the scoping document at Appendix 2

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report and are available on request:

Contact Centre Performance Review 2003/04 – 2009/10

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