

**Report for:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Item number:** 10

**Title:** Customer Service Transformation Programme

**Report authorised by :** Tracie Evans, Chief Operating Officer

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** Non-key

**1. Describe the issue under consideration**

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary update on the Customer Service Transformation Programme, previously briefed to Overview & Scrutiny in March 2016.

**2. Cabinet Member Introduction**

Not applicable

**3. Recommendations**

That the information provided in this report is noted.

**4. Reasons for decision**

Not applicable

**5. Alternative options considered**

Not applicable

**6. Background information**

The Customer Service Transformation Programme has been in place since 2013 and helped to consolidate the council's 'front door' by bringing 12 services from across the council into the Contact Centre and Customer Service Centres. This has supported significant savings targets as part of our Medium Term, Financial Savings plan.

The My Account online portal, allowing customers to access their accounts and transact with the council across a range of services, was launched in February 2016 and had ambitious uptake targets seeking to achieve 90% of households signed up by March 17. This is in line with our ambitions to be a digital council where the majority of council transactions could take place online, supported by the Contact Centre and Customer Service Centres for complex enquiries and for people not able to access online services who could then self serve in our Customer Service Centres.

The integration of Customer Service Centres in two of our main libraries (Marcus Garvey and Wood Green) has further supported this aim, providing computers and support for online access. They have both been operational for some months now and over that time Officers have better understood some of the drivers of demand in those Customer Service Centres which will help improve performance in months to come, the briefing will refer to some of those drivers and improvements.

## 6.1 Operational context

### **Achieved:**

- £1,889m savings delivered by consolidating services over two financial years
- 37% reduction in staffing in 2016/17 predicated by assumptions around take up of digital services

There was a whole service restructure during 2016 which affected over 198.2 full-time equivalent posts leading to the loss of 29.2 full-time equivalent posts. The service is now settling and teams are becoming established month on month.

### **Current position:**

- Slower than expected uptake of online services, despite being one of the faster growing authorities for My Account use
- Leading to demand reduction not fully realised

The high volume service areas have known annual peaks in demand activity, all occurring at the end of the financial year placing pressure on the resources available.

High volume areas are:

- Homes for Haringey; 8% face to face and 40% Contact Centre
- Benefits; 52% face to face and 13% Contact Centre
- Council Tax; 13% face to face and 17% Contact Centre
- Parking; 25% in face to face and 10% Contact centre

This equates to 98% in the face to face centres and 80% in the Contact Centre.

In more recent years we have also seen a significant increase in the introduction of Controlled Parking Zones. While this provides an increase in revenue for the Council, it drives additional contacts and processing volumes in the Call Centre and Service Centres, which must be managed with existing resources.

## **6.2 Key Strands of Customer Services Transformation programme**

### **Digital – Contact Centre, online service provision and channel shift**

A new vision for customer services was imagined that is fundamentally underpinned by the realisation of a successful channel shift strategy allied to a new operating model.

**The new operating model has now been implemented to encompass twelve service areas within the Contact Centre namely:**

- Housing Services
- Homes for Haringey
- Benefits
- Council Tax
- Traffic Management (controlled parking and fines)
- Parks & Recreation
- Environmental Services
- Planning & Building Control
- Library Services
- Electoral Services
- Registrars
- School Admissions.

The above services reflect progress on the vision for Customer Services in 2013, to become a single front-door for all tier 1 customer contacts. We continue to liaise with other services to progress the vision.

### **Key Deliverables (2015 – March 2017):**

As a result of the work undertaken by Customer Services & Libraries over the last two years to bring all aspects of transformational activity within Customer Services & Libraries into a single programme of work; the following is a summary of key deliverables to date:

- Initiated the Customer Service Transformation Digital project to implement My Account within 3 phases
- To date (13 March 2017) 42,959 Households have registered for My Account (40,955 have been activated)
- Procured a contract extension with Agilisys to provide support and maintenance until 2020, which reduced the original contract value

- Directly engaged and contributed to a new look and feel to the Council's website
- Introduction of a call recording system
- Facilitated a series of separate panels with focus groups of Residents to review key contact channels
- Hosted two face to face meetings in the Contact Centre with a Resident Scrutiny Panel as part of ongoing commitment around engagement and transparency
- Established three "Task & Finish" projects with multi-disciplinary teams in volume areas namely Homes for Haringey, Benefits and Parking designed to develop and implement quick win initiatives
- Consolidated previous two Cisco telephony platforms into one and migrated to the latest version that brings with it enhanced features and capabilities
- To do - update/upgrade of Switchboard to new version of the UCCX telephone platform (v.11.5) to deliver a fully automated solution.

#### **Service Demand in Digital Contact Centre:**

- Across all service demand areas in the Digital Contact Centre we are seeing a circa 24% reduction (April 2016 – Jan 2017).

### **6.3 Face to Face – integration of Customer Service Centres into libraries, new ways of working, capital programme**

#### **Service integration and capital investment (2015/16)**

Circa £3.3m was invested in the refurbishment of Marcus Garvey library which included the integration of Customer Services that were previously located at Apex House. The refurbishment has provided a high quality flexible, versatile blank canvas on which to re-establish the team and develop the service.

So far, as part of phase one circa £700k has been invested at Wood Green library to relocate Customer Services from 48 Station Road to the library. Phase two will see investment in the library space to fully integrate the services and facilitate new ways of working.

#### **Service integration and capital investment (2017/18)**

##### **Capital investment**

£ 2.3m of capital investment is planned for 2017/18, this includes:

- Some refurbishment of Hornsey Library to retain the intrinsic look and feel of a period listed building whilst modernising and improving the service offer there.
- Some refurbishment of the library space at Wood Green to improve the environment for customers and ensure that the Customer Service and Library provision is complementary. Due to the potential life span of the building the

refurbishment will be focussed on improving the furniture and layout of the library rather than building works.

- Investment in improving technology in libraries, working alongside Information Technology and the hardware replacement programme to ensure that the basics are fit for purpose and with a view to innovation and self service.

### **Service integration**

Staff teams at Marcus Garvey and Wood Green are being cross skilled to work across different service areas to build a flexible, agile workforce that can be responsive to peak demand, while recognising and retaining specialist knowledge within Customer Service and Libraries to ensure the services are complementary to each other.

A weekly one hour training session has been used to raise awareness of service transformation within the wider team.

Adjustments are being made to timetables to minimise the impact of break times on service performance whilst ensuring staff take adequate breaks.

### **Service demand**

There are two key areas of demand in Customer Service Centres - Housing Benefit & Council tax reduction, and Traffic management.

62% of customers were seen within 20 minutes in 2014/15 and 61% in 2015/16. To date this year, 55% of customers have been seen within 20 minutes in February Year to date.

The volume of ticketed customers has reduced from 145,515 in 2015/16 to 135,209 in 2016/17 a reduction of 7.08% February Year to date.

## **6.4 Business Change - Support and facilitate change through governance of the programme, partnerships, reporting on and monitoring performance**

The restructure in 2016 established a Business Change Team, which was created to support Customer Services and Libraries across a wide range of functions; from service improvement and quality, to project and change management.

As part of the improvement and quality function, the team provides staff training, produces performance and analytic data and handles the business administration. The team also manages feedback for the service.

The Business Change team is working across Customer Services and Libraries to produce customer insight and enhanced reporting, introduce web chat and automated call backs, and implement improvements in line with Corporate Delivery Unit recommendations.

The Business Change team also hold regular partnership meetings with all services most notably key the volume areas including Homes for Haringey,

Housing Benefits, Council Tax and Parking. This enables formal monitoring of performance, identifies issues and future changes for mitigation. The approach is collaborative and brings services together to resolve issues, leading to service development and ongoing improvement initiatives.

#### **6.5 Customer Service Key deliverables planned for 2017/18**

- A temporary increase of staffing levels from March 2016 for up to 6 months to improve performance
- A pilot scheme at Wood Green for customers to self-scan their change of circumstances documents, with a view to extending to Marcus Garvey if successful
- The use of hand-held terminals to support the floor-walking operating model
- Trial appointments-based service provision
- The introduction of web chat to support online service applications
- The offer of an automated call back service from the Contact Centre
- Customer insight and enhanced reporting through My Account
- Proactively planning to mitigate and manage pressure points
- Regular activities to promote online sign up
- Assisted self service offered in both centres
- Realisation of outcomes from Task and Finish groups to improve processes for high demand areas

#### **Continued work with our Strategic Partner (Agilisys):**

- Council Tax Enquiry eForm
- Student Exemption eForm
- Benefits Enquiry eForm
- Discretionary Housing Payments eForm
- Free School Meals and Clothing Grant eForm
- Evidence Upload eForm

The introduction of these eForms, that will be available through My Account, will create ease of access for the customer and enable consistency of data capture for the service areas.

#### **Project Related Initiatives:**

- Report IT – Redesign, increase offer and optimise
- Report IT – Report someone dumping rubbish
- My Account - Change of circumstances module
- Move to My Account release 5.10 or 5.11
- Addition of customer data analytics application
- Re-labelling of My Account links for the following, to improve customer experience:
  - See My Data
  - Single sign-on to Parking
  - Change of address eForm

- Web Improvement Initiatives
  - RNIB Accreditation
  - Developing a 'Find My Nearest' solution

## **7. Contribution to strategic outcomes**

The Customer Service Transformation programme fully supports one of the key cross cutting themes within the Corporate plan of 'Customer Focus' and placing our customer needs at the centre of everything we do.

## **8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)**

Not applicable

## **9. Use of Appendices**

Not applicable

## **10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

Not applicable