

STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 8
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Report of the Service Director for Adult Services and Communities		
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CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME – FRONT DOOR TRANSFORMATION

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report is being presented at the request of the Joint Meeting of Scrutiny Committees held in November 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To scrutinise and endorse the approach being taken to develop a new ‘front door’ model for the council.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Customer Experience Programme aims to improve the way our customers access services, to provide more opportunities for customers to self-serve or seek support from civil society organisations, and to ensure customers with the greatest need reach the services they require as quickly as possible.

The approach supports all aspects of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Customer Experience Programme is the council’s major transformation programme and comprises a number of distinct workstreams:
- Front Door, the main focus of this report
 - Delivery Models – which is developing new ways of delivering key services through, for example, integrating health and social care services
 - New Ways of Working – which is providing tools and systems that enable staff to work in ways more appropriate to the needs of our residents
- 4.2 The council continues to operate within an incredibly challenging financial position. Over the last five years, the council has seen its government funding cut by £44million – nearly 40 per cent of its government grant. At the same time demand for council services continues to grow, and we have to respond to this demand to ensure those most in need can continue to get the right services.
- 4.3 Despite these challenges, the council is of the view that there is a different way other than service cuts to achieve a balanced budget whilst at the same time meeting the needs and demands of our residents.

- 4.4 The Customer Experience Programme has therefore been developed with three main objectives:
- To reduce costs
 - To manage demand
 - To increase revenue
- 4.5 This report focuses specifically on the Front Door project, which has a savings target of £1.46M in 2016/17, increasing to £4.16M from 2017/18 onwards.

5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 The Customer Experience Programme is a council initiative which targets a reduction in costs, an increase in revenue and the meeting of future needs through demand management. The programme is divided into a number of themes; one of these themes is the 'Front Door'. The 'Front Door' was chosen as a theme because we need to:
- Reduce demand for services, i.e. develop a preventative rather than reactive approach
 - Increase self-service and facilitate channel shift – diverting demand from high cost channels to lower cost channels. Customers should be able to choose to interact with the council through the channel that is most suitable for them, e.g. web, social media, telephone or face to face
 - Increase first contact resolution – all routine transactions should be resolved at the first point of contact wherever possible
 - Reduce, and preferably eliminate, avoidable contacts
- 5.2 The Front Door can be defined as *'the first point of contact where an individual can access information, advice and guidance and/or a service'*. The council's website and our existing customer contact centre can, therefore, be defined as Front Doors. We recognise that it is not feasible to have a single Front Door¹ and so have agreed the following five year vision:

'...to ensure that customers have access to a Front Door that will enable them to resolve their needs, and that the Council will work with partner organisations to realise the concept of 'No Wrong Front Door' that aligns with our front door' principles.'

In this description:

- a 'customer' is defined as existing or potential individuals, organisations or businesses who use or experience a council service
 - 'No Wrong Front Door' is defined as meaning that, regardless of the point of contact, the customer will receive consistent, comprehensive and accurate information, advice and guidance.
- 5.3 A series of key principles have been developed to ensure the new Front Door model is developed appropriately. These principles are as follows:
- **ASKED ONCE** – we will only ask the customer for any information needed once
 - **FIRST CONTACT RESOLUTION** – we will strive, wherever possible, to provide resolution at the first point of contact
 - **SELF-SERVE** – we will maximise any opportunity for the customer to self-serve
 - **CO-PRODUCTION** – we will ensure the process is customer led and takes account of the customers' needs and views
 - **SAFE** – we will identify and act upon any safeguarding concerns throughout the process
 - **CONSISTENT** – we will ensure that information provided across possible front doors is consistent, but also both comprehensive and accurate
 - **SUPPORTED** – we will ensure maximum take up of universal information and provision as

¹ 'Single Front Door' would mean the Council would only have a single *'first point of access'*, for example, customers would only be able to access the Council online via the website.

the norm through interactive use of technology, blended with “expert” assistance

- **INFORMED** – we will ensure that customers are kept informed and understand any service standards
- **LOCATION** – we will ensure that our front door will be located in the most appropriate settings, including community bases.

5.4 Operating Model

5.4.1 Current Model

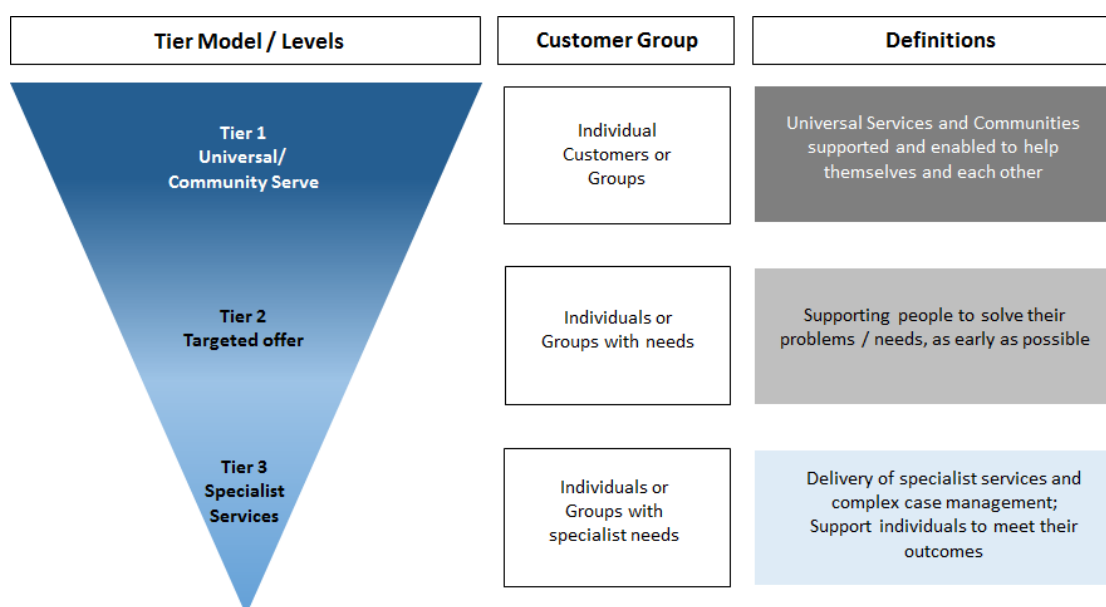
The council currently provides its Front Door largely via the Customer Contact Centre operated through the Peterborough-Serco Strategic Partnership (PSSP). The Contact Centre handles face to face enquiries at Bayard Place (which is recognised as the main customer contact point) and a reception facility at the Town Hall. The Contact Centre also contains the main call centre which handles general enquiries, provides a switchboard function and delivers a number of other service processes.

Not all customer contact is handled through the Contact Centre however, and a significant number of telephone, e-mail and white mail customer contact points exist within the various service areas and partner organisations (e.g. Amey, Vivacity, etc). Therefore, the service is fragmented and a single view of the customer has not been fully realised. A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system has been introduced in the Contact Centre, but is not fully embedded or capturing the detail of all customer contact required for the future given the fragmented service previously described. Having this single view would allow for improved customer service, better commissioning, the ability to predict future demand and could be used to identify trigger points for early intervention and prevention activities.

5.4.2 Future Model

We have developed a future operating model which is illustrated in Figure 1 below. This is a three tier model and the Front Door will form Tier 1 and most of Tier 2, and these are discussed in more detail below.

Figure 1: Operating Model



5.5 **Tier 1 – Universal/Community Serve/Self-Serve: Universal services and communities supported and enabled to help themselves and each other**

Tier 1 is first contact resolution; its main purpose is to resolve need at the first point of contact either through the provision of information and advice (including signposting), the provision of a service or an appropriate referral to an internal or external service who can resolve their need. Tier 1 will be provided through self-serve or community-serve facilities, or through the contact centre.

Tier 1 is divided into three distinct functions:

1. Community provision and community serve
2. Self-serve, including customer accounts and e-forms
3. Peterborough First Contact – the new names for the Contact Centre

5.5.1 **Community Provision and Community Serve**

In order to ensure the most appropriate resolution is available to our customers, and to ensure we can focus our efforts on those most in need, we will develop programmes of work that build on the new People and Communities Strategy. They will focus on empowering people and developing stronger communities to enable and motivate them to develop awareness, skills, capability and technology to respond to identified local needs. We will support the civil society sector (voluntary, community and faith sector and social enterprises) to work together or with us in order to deliver shared outcomes and to align or pool resources. This will enable additional funding to be leveraged in to focus on the areas of greatest impact, need and potential.

This priority will help a wide range of providers and funders to understand the impact they do/can have on communities and individuals, and support them to continually improve and innovate. This work will also have a key role in evaluating the impact of new services to ensure that they are responding to identified needs and unlocking the potential of local support networks to improve early intervention and prevention services, i.e. to reduce loneliness, isolation and vulnerability.

To achieve this we propose to develop a series of processes:

- i. Identification of service need and gaps in service provision, and the sharing of these needs and gaps with civil society organisations
- ii. Enterprise Pathways – a clear journey of support for voluntary sector organisations, community groups or parishes to develop their governance, business plans, operational procedures, procurement procedures and quality
- iii. Service Theme Pathways – upskilling support for appropriate groups to deliver specific pieces of work around a theme or in an area that may need more quality oversight
- iv. Volunteer Pathways – a clear co-ordinated pathway of support for volunteers to help them gain the skills and abilities they need as well as signpost them to appropriate supported volunteer opportunities

5.5.2 **Self-Serve**

Mobile and web technologies are providing ever expanding opportunities for customers to self-serve or to interact with the council electronically, potentially reducing demand or diverting it to cheaper channels. The website is fundamental to enabling customers to self-serve whether at home, on their smart phones (i.e. apps, touch tone payment line and SMS texting) or via a terminal in a council reception or in a community location.

We will strive to ensure that all services, available via other access channels, are enabled on-line via the website, through the use of integrated smart eForms. On-line self-serve encompasses facilities for all customer transactions (apply for, report it, book it and pay for it), self-assessment and the provision of information, advice and guidance.

Self-serve facilities will be offered at council receptions, libraries and other community locations. Assisted support for self-serve will be delivered through a combination of web chat and direct line access phones to build confidence within our customers to make use of the self-serve facilities. At council receptions, floor walkers will be available to support the use of the self-serve facilities.

5.5.3 **Peterborough First Contact Centre**

The Peterborough First Contact Centre will be the first point of contact for telephone, email, social media, webchat, and white mail received by the council. The key objective of this function is to divert demand to community serve and local/national organisations where applicable, and provide holistic services (i.e. information, advice, guidance, transactions, signposting and internal / external referrals) to meet both stated and unstated need.

5.6 **Tier 2 – Supporting people to solve their problems/needs as early as possible**

Tier 2 will deliver targeted assessments to determine the needs and requirements of a customer and appropriate solutions. The tier includes the provision of prevention, early intervention and enablement services, and crisis intervention with the aim to solve problems and needs as early as possible.

The Peterborough First Contact Centre will deal with customers that require targeted assessment and review or crisis² intervention, and will provide direct and brokered service solutions. The First Contact Centre will assess a customer's need against capacity and risks to establish the appropriate solutions. An end to end solution will be provided wherever possible, referring on only if the need requires specialist support or where support can be provided by a more appropriate service or external organisation.

This function predominately provides intervention services that deliver immediate and short term solutions, but can provide medium and long term interventions that do not require advanced specialist support.

5.7 The new Peterborough First Contact Centre will be delivered via the Peterborough-Serco Strategic Partnership. Staff from across the council will be transferred into it, meaning that qualified and experienced staff will be working alongside generic but well trained agents with the aim of resolving as many enquiries as possible first time.

6. **IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 This is an ambitious programme of change which we anticipate will deliver significant improvements to the ways in which our customers access services. Many customers will be encouraged to help themselves, where appropriate, through better quality information available online or via civil society sector organisations and this requires investment in both our digital offer as well as in the new Peterborough First Contact Centre.

7. **CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Customer Experience Programme will include appropriate public consultation relevant to the individual projects within it.

8. **NEXT STEPS**

8.1 We have developed a phasing tool to determine the order in which services are considered for the new Front Door. This will commence from April 2016, and the programme will run for two years, during which time it will expand to eventually cover all council services.

² 'Crisis' can be defined as the presentation of an individual whose normal coping mechanisms and resources have become overwhelmed by the onset or relapse of a severe illness, or through experiencing significant situational change and the crisis renders the individual and/or carer unable to manage their changed circumstances, presenting a risk to themselves or others, thus requiring an urgent assessment of their needs

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

9.1 None

10. APPENDICES

10.1 N/A