

**To:** City Executive Board

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> October 2009

**Item No: 11**

**Report of:** Helen Bishop  
Head of Customer Services

**Title of Report:** Customer Contact Strategy

### **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** This report presents the City Council's Customer Contact Strategy for approval. "Customers First" is part of the Council's transformation programme, focused on putting customers needs at the forefront of its work. The Customer Contact Strategy sets out where we are now, where we want to be in 2012 and what the key milestones are in our journey.

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Oscar Van Nooijen

**Report Approved by:**

**Finance:** Emma Burson

**Legal:** Emma Griffiths

**Recommendation(s):**

**Members are asked to:**

- 1. Approve the Customer Contact Strategy.**

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1** "Customers First" is part of the Council's transformation programme, focused on putting customers needs at the forefront of its work, improving customer service and joining up its work across all service areas.

- 1.2 The Customer Contact Strategy (attached) paints a strong picture of who our communities are and what they need from the City Council in order to make our services quick and easily accessible. It sets out where we are now, where we want to be in 2012 and what the key milestones are in our journey.

## **2.0 Customer Insight and Consultation**

- 2.1 Using the most up to date customer insight information available the demographics of the City council's population is articulated in terms of growth, ethnicity, deprivation, unemployment levels and access to internet technology.
- 2.2 Against this statistical backdrop there is customer feedback from a Talkback Citizens Panel conducted in Spring 2009 and a more specific user survey of the City Council's face-to-face services undertaken in July 2009. This information has been analysed to help shape the strategic direction recommended.
- 2.3 A draft version of the Customer Contact Strategy has been distributed to all service heads for their input and discussed at the Wider Leadership Team.
- 2.4 A Scrutiny Panel was also held on 5<sup>th</sup> October specifically to explore and question the content of this strategy.

## **3.0 Aims, principles and targets**

- 3.1 The key aims of the strategy are:
  - **CLICK:** Increasing access over the web.
  - **CALL:** Reducing waiting times for our phone services.
  - **COME IN:** Improving the ways we manage our face-to-face interactions with customers.
  - **CUSTOMER FEEDBACK:** Listening and responding to our customers.
  - **RIGHT FIRST TIME:** Dealing with customer queries at the first point of contact
- 3.2 The strategy has three key principles in terms of customer service delivery, they are: customer-focus, quick and easy accessibility and cost effectiveness.
- 3.3 The key targets in delivering this strategy are:
  - Improve our website to make it more 'transactional', increasing the number of transactions carried out online by 5% by March 2010 and 10% by March 2011.
  - Answer 80% of telephone calls directed to our contact points within 20 seconds by March 2011.

- Increase the number of customers that can reach us first time on the Council's main service lines to 90% by March 2010.
- Reduce avoidable contact by 10% by March 2010.
- Improve first contact resolution ('do it right first time') performance to over 50% by March 2012, moving to 70% in four years.
- Increase customer satisfaction by 10% by March 2012.
- Realise at least 10% efficiency improvements via business process improvement, by bringing areas of customer contact together, and taking advantage of economies of scale.

#### **4.0 Where do we want to be in 2012?**

4.1 In summary, by 2012 the customer contact vision for Oxford City Council is:

- A consistent, reliable, high quality level of customer service, underpinned by corporate service standards, delivered in a way our customers want and are able to use;
- Easy access to the council's full range of services, using the council's website and e-mail, calling the council's contact centres on our one free phone number, or by coming into one of our two one-stop shops;
- A service that can solve most customers' problems there and then, at the first point of contact, enabled by customer relationship management (CRM) processes and technology;
- A modern, flexible structure with fewer better skilled staff and higher productivity;
- Working in partnership for our customers with complementary organisations; and
- Value for money achieved by: lower transaction costs; the removal of duplication from our processes and the smart use of technology; and the rationalisation that follows from handling all telephone and face-to-face enquiries through a single point of contact.

#### **5.0 Risk Assessment**

5.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken and the risk register is attached at Appendix A. All risks have been mitigated to an acceptable level.

#### **6.0 Equalities Impact**

6.1 An initial equalities impact assessment has been conducted in respect of the Customer Contact Strategy. This is attached at Appendix B. There are no negative impacts identified. This strategy is focused on providing multiple ways for our customers to access the complete range of our services, and expects each of those channels to offer consistent quality customer service that is right first time. Therefore, from an equalities perspective this strategy will deliver positive outcomes for the community.

#### **7.0 Legal Implications**

7.1 There are no comments to be made by the Legal Service.

## **8.0 Financial Implications**

8.1 It is understood that each project strand of the strategy will generate its own business case and action plans.

## **9.0 Recommendations**

**Members are asked to:**

**9.1 Approve the Customer Contact Strategy.**

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**Background papers: None**  
**Version number: 1.0**

Appendix A

Customer Contact Strategy Risk Register

No.	Risk Description Link to Corporate Obj	Gross Risk		Cause of Risk	Mitigation	Net Risk		Further Management of Risk: Transfer/Accept/Reduce/Avoid	Monitoring Effectiveness	Current Risk					
Risk Score <b>Impact Score:</b> 1 =Insignificant; 2 = Minor; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Major; 5 = Catastrophic Almost Certain <b>Probability Score:</b> 1 = Rare; 2 = Unlikely; 3 = Possible; 4 = Likely; 5 =															
1	One telephone number project does not deliver on time  Transforming Oxford City council by improving value for money and service performance	I 4	P 3	Third party suppliers can not deliver in timescales  New central location for contact centre not found or available in time	Ensure sufficient notice is given to key stakeholders  Mitigation effectiveness: high	I 4	P 2	Action:  Comprehensive project management, clear specification of requirements and early discussions with suppliers/property team.  Action Owner: Helen Bishop  Mitigating Control: Control Owner: Helen Bishop	Outcome required:  Agreed deliverable project management timescales.  Milestone date: 31.12.09	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	I	P
2	No Corporate ownership of Customer Contact Strategy aims, principles and targets  Transforming Oxford City council by improving value for money and service performance	3	3	Lack of understanding and pockets of resistance	Raise awareness throughout the organisation and win over 'hearts and minds'.  Mitigation effectiveness: medium	2	2	Action:  Internal communications programme. Early involvement of key stakeholders.  Action Owner: Helen Bishop  Mitigating Control: Control Owner: Helen	Outcome required:  Commitment and understanding from the key stakeholders to the Customer Contact Strategy objectives  Milestone date:						

								Bishop	Review progress each quarter						
3	<p>Possible dip in management performance of core business while transformational change is being delivered</p> <p>Transforming Oxford City council by improving value for money and service performance</p>	3	3	<p>Insufficient capacity to deliver the change agenda</p>	<p>Ensure that sufficient capacity and programme management is in place to deliver to agreed standards</p> <p>Mitigation effectiveness: high</p>	2	2	<p>Action: Review resourcing levels</p> <p>Authorisation for additional resources is in progress to oversee the programme management required to deliver the Customer Contact Strategy.</p> <p>Action Owner: Helen Bishop</p> <p>Mitigating Control: Control Owner: Helen Bishop</p>	<p>Outcome required:</p> <p>Additional resource in place.</p> <p>Milestone date: 31.12.09 and review progress each quarter</p>						