AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee	**Cabinet**
Date of Committee	**27 June 2006**
Report Title	**Delivering the Customer Service & Access Strategy**
Summary	This reports sets out recommendations for the Cabinet to consider for the delivery of the Customer Service & Access Strategy.

For further information please contact:	David Carter Strategic Director Performance & Development Tel 01926 412564 davidcarter@warwickshire.gov.uk	Kushal Birla Head of Customer Service & Access Tel: 01926 736362 kushalbirla@warwickshire.gov.uk

Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?	No
Background papers	None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-   Details to be specified

Other Committees	☒	Modernisation Group (Cllrs Alan Farnell, Bob Stevens, June Tandy, Tim Naylor and Jerry Roodhouse)
Local Member(s)	☒	N/A
Other Elected Members	☒	Cllr David Booth Cllr George Atkinson Cllr Bob Hicks Cllr June Tandy Cllr Jerry Roodhouse Cllr Sarah Boad Cllr Tim Naylor
Cabinet Member	☒	Cllr Peter Fowler
Chief Executive	☒	Jim Graham..
Legal	☒	David Carter

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Finance	☒	David Clarke – Strategic Director, Resources
Other Chief Officers	☒	Discussed @ the Strategic Directors Management Team meeting on 7th June 2006
District Councils	☐	....
Health Authority	☐	....
Police	☐	....
Other Bodies/Individuals	☐	....

FINAL DECISION   YES

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS: Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee	☐	....
To Council	☐	....
To Cabinet	☐	....
To an O & S Committee	☐	....
To an Area Committee	☐	....
Further Consultation	☐	....

Warwickshire County Council

Cabinet - 27 June 2006

Delivering the Customer Service & Access Strategy

Joint Report of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director of Performance and Development

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Recommendations

1   Approves the Customer Service and Access Strategy 2006-2009.

2   Supports the roll out of the next phase of development of the Customer Service Centre as outlined in this report.

3   Supports the development of a business case for an integrated Customer Service Centre and Joint One Stop Shops with Warwick District Council and recognises that one element of this aim can be delivered within existing capital and revenue resources through the development of a One Stop Shop at Shire Hall.

4   Recognises that the potential of the existing One Stop Shop at Kenilworth Library can be developed further.

5   Supports the development of a One Stop Shop at King's House Bedworth funded from within existing capital resources and the next phase of Customer Service Centre resources as per recommendation 2 above.

6   Supports a multi-site pilot of kiosks.

7   Supports the development of business cases for at least two more One Stop Shops, at least one of which will be located in an extended school.

8   That the funding for the programme be as follows:-

- Funding from the modernisation fund of £350k (£250k for Kings House and the Customer Service Centre and £100k for e-Access Points) in 2006/2007 and £250k in 2007/08 for Kings House and the Customer Service Centre

- Future year costs should be funded from either:

   o   Efficiency savings delivered within Directorates achieved through re-engineering processes/back office in conjunction with the Customer Service Centre; or

   o   Specific budget allocations where Members have approved the provision of enhanced services.

9   That all services which are capable of delivery through the Customer Service Centre, e-access and other forms of integrated customer service access points are reviewed from end to end by business process re-engineering to ensure that the benefits to customers and efficient service delivery are maximised.

Warwickshire County Council

1   Introduction

1.1   The County Council has the strapline 'Working for Warwickshire'. If we really mean this then we need to work together as one Council to be a customer-facing organisation. This means putting citizens, customers and clients at the very core of our business thinking and service delivery, both as an organisation and as individuals. We need to do business in locations in ways and at times that reflect what Warwickshire wants, rather than what suits us. This means going well beyond how people contact the Council – it will require a fundamental rethink of how we work together collectively and individually, and with others, to deliver services. In short, a much more integrated and personalised approach to doing business. This will involve a radical transformation of our end to end working practices, enabled and facilitated by investments in staff and our ICT systems and infrastructure. These investments will in time pay dividends in terms of consistent, high quality, responsive services at lower transaction costs.

1.2   The above approach is based on five key principles:

- Re-engineering our front facing and back office processes, from end to end to ensure that we deliver value for money and improved customer service
- Developing 'front doors' ie. Customer Service Centre, One Stop Shops which are recognised as seamless parts of each service
- Satisfying a least 80% of routine enquiries/service requests at the first point of contact with the Council
- Responding to the more complex service enquiries and requests via specialist support teams who inform and direct the work of the field staff as necessary
- Training and equipping these specialist field staff to provide in addition more generalised assistance and support across the County and partners services when and where appropriate

1.3   Routine enquiries/service requests would be dealt with through four principal channels:

- Council website   -   For contacts via the internet
- Customer Service Centre   -   For phone based contacts
- One Stop Shops/   -   For visits to Council premises,
  neighbourhood pilots/e-access   community venues etc
  points
- Field staff   -   For home/local support contacts

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Customer Access Choices
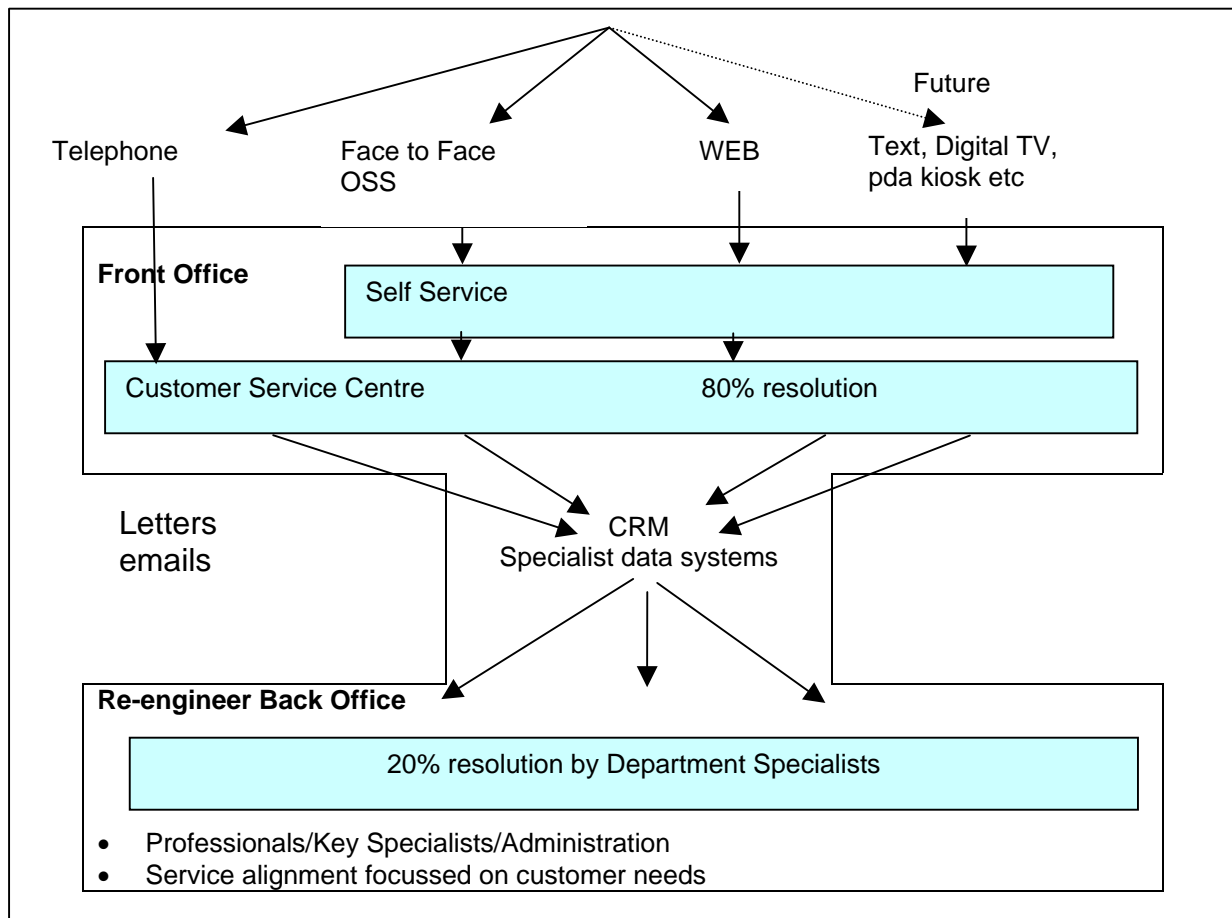
1.4 All staff and managers engaged in service delivery would have access to the information, systems and services they need 'anytime, anywhere' via broadband and a variety of mobile communications devices. Field staff would also have the technology to collect and forward local data whilst on the move. Staff would be empowered and involved in the shaping of improved services.

1.5 The attached (Appendix 1) draft Customer Service and Access Strategy sets out the vision for customer service over the next years 3 years and key elements to realising the vision. It is written as a high level, internal document with the intention of building staff and Member awareness and engagement in the first instance, before developing a Customer Charter which will establish the standards and services our customers can expect. The Customer Service and Access Strategy and a draft of this paper have been discussed in detail by Strategic Directors Management Team, which is supportive of these developments. The Strategy and a draft of the report have also been considered and supported by the Modernisation Group.

1.6 Appendix 2 summarises the results of public consultation which has informed the above Strategy.

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2   Towards Delivering the Vision

2.1   Elected Members have, over the last few years, made a number of decisions to improve access to Council services for citizens and customers.

2.2   In 2004, Cabinet approved a five year programme to develop the Customer Service Centre (CSC). The overall objectives of the five year programme were:

- Over the next five years, we should develop the pilot centre into a fully blown CSC, which handles not only telephone access to the County Council but also acts as the first-line provider of services.
- For people who want to visit Council Offices or designated One Stop Shops, the reception desks would link up with the CSC and would allow the same 'one stop' service to be offered in a consistent manner. Services provided would be relevant ie tailored to meet specific needs.
- The overall approach would compliment the self service facilities available via the County's website and would draw on the same underlying information and databases.

2.2.1   In response to customer research the Customer Service Centre was set up in September 2002 to test the idea that people could telephone the County Council with queries, complaints or requests for service, and at least 80% of the time would have their problem dealt with by the one person answering their telephone call.

The Centre was implemented to meet four key objectives:

- To make it easier for people to contact the County Council
- To improve the quality, reliability and consistency of services
- To free up professional expertise to focus on specialist tasks
- To improve efficiency in ways that helped offset the costs of running the Centre.

2.2.2   The Centre is located in Shire Hall, it embraces the Switchboard. It opens 6 days a week from 8.00 am – 8.00 pm on weekdays and 9.00 am – 4.00 pm on Saturdays.

There are plans to expand the centre so it operates as one centre but using two physical sites – at Shire Hall and at King's House, Bedworth. The latter site was chosen for two reasons – meeting our own economic development objectives and the likelihood that staff recruitment would be easier.

This year the Centre will deliver the following services:

Enquiry Type	Enquiry Description	Estimated Annual Call Volume
Switchboard	All incoming calls to 410410 and those sites where all calls are initially	660,000

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Enquiry Type	Enquiry Description	Estimated Annual Call Volume
	channelled through the central facility	
Car Clear	Abandoned vehicle scheme to support the reduction in arson related crime. Liaising with Districts, Boroughs and the Police.	1200
Library Enquiries for 13 Libraries	General advice line providing information and services to library customers.	113,000
Social Care	Information requests, signposting and contact assessments to determine eligibility. Working with the DWP to make benefit referrals.	35,000
Disabled Parking Badges (Calls)	Providing information and support regarding the application process and eligibility	11,500
Disabled Parking Badges (Processing)	Receipting and processing applications for Disabled Parking Badges to determine eligibility and produce the badge. Liaising with GPs to confirm Health related issues affecting eligibility.	10,000
Vintage	General advice on any service (not just WCC provided) for anyone over the age of 50.	600
Street Lighting	Recording reports of faulty street lighting and illuminated signs.	9,500
Web Enquiries	Acting as a filtering point for web enquiries generated the Web Feedback and routing requests etc. to the appropriate services for response.	4,200
Highways Management	Customer service centre development and integration of systems	37,000 Approximate
Change of Address process	Initially supporting limited services with a view to expanding to all areas	Being developed
Skills for Life	National Pilot in conjunction with the DfES signposting and supporting learners into basic skills learning	Being developed
Racist Incidents	Reporting of racially motivated incidents	To be developed
PC Bookings in Libraries	Booking of library based PCs	To be developed
Registrations	Answering frequently asked questions and booking of appointments	To be developed

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2.2.3 The results achieved by the Centre to date are encouraging.

a) Easier Contact
There has been an increase in both the amount of people contacting the County Council. For example, library calls have more than doubled and there has been an increase in people requesting assessments for adult social care.

There is also evidence of the previously hidden demand for contacting the Council when it is 'closed'. About 4% of the calls are out of hours. Most calls routed through the Centre have been solved through just the one telephone call. Customer Satisfaction surveys have given positive results. The latest survey indicated 98% of the customers were either very satisfied or satisfied with the service.

b) Better Service
There is evidence that the Centre has achieved both more reliable, consistent and better service. Probably the best example is with the issue of Disabled Peoples badges – the standardised process has cut out variability in provision and enabled badges to be issued routinely in days when previously it could take weeks.

c) Freeing up Professional Time
The Centre has demonstrated successfully that non professionals can undertake successfully some of the routine jobs that take up professional's time. That has been the case in undertaking first line assessments for adult care services.

There is also evidence that the Centre has screened out inappropriate assessment referrals and are passing on only those which are likely to result in community care service being provided. As a greater percentage of assessments result in a care plan, this supports the fact that resources are being targeted towards the most vulnerable.

d) Increased Efficiency
Comparing call handling costs post and pre Customer Service Centre is unsurprisingly not easy because there were no records kept of the amount of time and resources which call handling took in individual departments. There is evidence that pressure on front line staff has been reduced. However, there is difficulty in realising these staff savings in the short term because we are freeing up only parts of individuals' jobs. However this would come with the rollout of the Centre across all appropriate services and across the County, creating the critical mass that would deliver real economies of scale.

The Centre took part in a benchmarking exercise commissioned by Advantage West Midlands and undertaken by KPMG. The Centre was

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one of 30 centres to take part across a number of difference industries. Whilst highlighting areas for improvement, the final report was in the main very positive.

Copies of this report are available from Kushal Birla 01926 (73)6362

2.3　In November 2003, the Cabinet approved the proposal made by the Warwickshire Online Partnership (WOLP), that the six Warwickshire authorities jointly procure and share the hardware and software needed to support the development of local contact centres. The Joint Contact Centre concept had the backing of £1.3 m grant from the ODPM. By engaging with and supporting the WOLP, the County Council has obtained and operated the technology it needs for the longer term and position itself to collaborate fully with District/Borough partners in the future as opportunity permits, all at a lower cost than by taking an independent stance.

The technology ie the Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) has enabled the County Council and Warwick District Council to operate a One Stop Shop at Kenilworth Library. The CRM is capable of providing clear 'trackable' data on all customers and on all service activity. This information is capable of analysis to provide information which will inform a more proactive approach to customer priorities and engagement.

2.3.1　In September 2004, the Cabinet approved the County and Warwick District Council piloting One Stop Shops.   In October last year, the joint One Stop Shop in partnership with Warwick District Council opened to the public.

Warwickshire Direct – Kenilworth enables the public to access information and advice from a single integrated point of contact using the same CRM system. The service is delivered by a joint staff team – the District Council staff are seconded to Warwickshire County Council and managed operationally by the County Council.

2.3.2　Services available to the public include registering for Council tax, claiming council tax and housing benefit, viewing planning applications for Kenilworth, applying for a County wide Bus Pass etc. There are also regular surgeries held by the local MP, Councillors, Department of Works and Pension advisers, Housing Needs officers and Community Beat (Police) Officers.

As part of the continual programme of development, it is planned to offer first line assessments for adults, disabled parking badges and the Car Clear service in the next few months. Discussions are continuing with other Services on the possibility of providing further services.

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2.3.3 The benefits to date include:

- Pooling resources to improve services to customers
- Joined up service delivery for both authorities through a common front door, seamless and transparent
- Removal of customer confusion on 'which Council does what'
- An improved refurbished library for the public
- Improved library opening hours at no extra cost for the County
- Increased career opportunity for staff within the County
- Sharing of skills and knowledge in the development of One Stop Shop processes, removing service, geographical and professional barriers
- Closer integration with and between the Customer Service Centres of both authorities with the integration of the ICT/CRM system and shared training programmes

2.3.4 The first Customer Satisfaction Survey undertaken in April this year shows high satisfaction rates for the services currently being provided (100% satisfied and 86% very satisfied). The visitors were asked how likely they would use the following services if these were provided:

	Likely to Use %
Local 'What's On' and other Tourist Information	80
Leisure Activities, Museums and Parks	78
Trading Standards	75
Fire Safety	61
Social Care Information	54
Births, Deaths & Marriage Registration	53
Disability Services	40
Home Help, Care Homes	36
Information on Children's Services	15
Information to Schools	10
Information on Pre School	7
Adoption, Fostering	5

The above feedback is valuable in assessing what future services will be rolled out into the One Stop Shop.

2.4 To date the following has been achieved:

- There is common infrastructure in place shared between our current partners.
- The website is continually being developed to enable the public to benefit from self service.
- A One Stop Shop was piloted in Kenilworth to test location, types of service, hours of access, partnership working.

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3   The Next Phase

The vision will take time to accomplish. Getting better access coupled with better services is going to be a complex challenge and therefore there needs to be a phased approach. The improved Customer Service and Access and Efficiency Savings which the Council wishes to achieve, can only be delivered if the Customer Service Centre/One Stop Shop's are recognised as a seamless part of each service. This can only be done if the whole of the service is re-engineered from end to end.

If the Customer Service Centre is simply a different front end for services which otherwise continue to operate in exactly the same way, we will not achieve the Council's objectives.

In order to maximise the benefits to customers and efficient service delivery it is essential that all services capable of being delivered through the Customer Service Centre, e-access and other forms of integrated customer access points are reviewed from end to end by business process re-engineering.

Having achieved the above and to enable the authority to maximise it's anticipated outcomes/benefits (see 4 below), we now need to move to the next phase of delivery.

The next phase of development is the:

- Implementation of King's House
- Development of additional services into the CSC
- Development of web-enabled services
- Further pilots including One Stop Shops, kiosks, working with other partners eg Health/Police

3.1   Kings House and the Customer Service Centre

The estimated cost of implementing the CSC at Kings House, developing the planned additional services as detailed below to be rolled into the CSC during the current year and providing a One Stop Shop is £500,000

Service/Provision
Member information - answering frequently asked questions regarding cabinet meetings and member details
Emergency planning - implementing a Countywide approach to information management during periods of emergency.
Waste Management - all enquiries relating to waste and recycling issues
Inclusion of the 19 remaining libraries
Implementation of voice recognition for the switchboard function to reduce the number of calls answered in the centre and increase self serve call resolution (not a push button IVR solution, it recognises verbal requests)
Education transport-frequently asked questions and advice on application
Free School Meals-frequently asked questions and advice on application

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Service/Provision
Education frequently asked questions
Anti Bullying-frequently asked questions
HRMS systems support-frequently asked questions and signposting
F+R Fire - Safety Helpline-frequently asked questions
F+R Help on call -frequently asked questions
F+R Home call -frequently asked questions
F+R Industrial + commercial unit -frequently asked questions
F+R Working with Young People- frequently asked questions
Traffic -frequently asked questions
Recruitment -frequently asked questions
Services for the Deaf Team-frequently asked questions
Complaints -frequently asked questions
Customer satisfaction - technology to automate satisfaction-testing activity. Initially trialled in CSC with a view to roll out for other services
Integration of Street Lighting systems - to remove duplication of effort between front and back office.
Roll out of Change of Address-incorporate other services in change of address approach where applicable.
Introduce a performance management framework-IT work to pull together relevant statistical information across all access channels
Introduce a technology-based mechanism that is capable of automatically generating letter, scripts and making telephone connection to support the survey process.

3.2 Further Partnership Working with Warwick District Council

3.2.1 Face to face contact remains a popular choice for some service users who choose not to use web or telephone based services.

3.2.2 We have identified a potential package of integrated services with Warwick District Council which would involve an integrated Customer Service Centre and One Stop Shops in Kenilworth (existing), Whitnash (already approved), Leamington Spa and Warwick. The Joint One Stop Shop Members Steering Group has asked officers to prepare a business case for each authority to consider. The County Council could deliver a major part of its contribution by funding a One Stop Shop at Shire Hall within existing budgets.

3.3. E-Access Points

3.3.1 A number of authorities have implemented kiosk facilities as part of their overall integrated customer service and access strategy. Kiosks can provide local council, transport, Crimestoppers, community information, free e-mail and job finding services. The kiosks provide an outdoor controlled broadband service.

3.3.2 To assess the benefits of such facilities we would need to pilot the kiosks in particular communities working in partnership with local town and parish councils and at for example, transport interchanges.

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Location is a critical issue and will need to follow researched public preferences. One community would be targeted to provide the critical mass to enable us to evaluate the full benefits of such a facility. Therefore, it is proposed that we provide 5 kiosks in an area to be confirmed at an estimated cost of £100,000 set up costs and £40,000 annual running costs.

3.3.3   Discussions are taking place with the Warwickshire On Line Partnership on the possibility of sharing the costs.

3.4   Partnership working with Schools, Police, Health, Supermarkets

3.4.1   The Authority could consider other potential pilots. These currently include:

- Extended schools
- Southam Town Centre Development
- Mobile One Stop Shop
- Rugby Business Improvement District
- Police & Health

All these are at an early stage of development and reports will be submitted to a future Cabinet.

4   Key Outcomes and Critical Success Factors

The anticipated key outcomes are:

Customers

- High quality, reliable, flexible and responsive services
- Expanded range of 'self-serve' services available through a variety of electronic channels
- A choice of access channels tailored to meet specific service needs
- Seamless and transparent services
- Accessibility in locations, at time and in ways which ensure social inclusion.

Staff

- Part of a modern progressive customer focussed organisation
- Greater empowerment and involvement in the shaping of improved services
- Greater investment in front line services
- Increased job satisfaction
- Availability of better and more up to date management information

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Organisation

- Higher customer satisfaction rates
- Reduced cost delivery and better value for money
- Greater investment in front line services
- Joined up services with partners enabling access to services through a common front door
- Improved relationship with key stakeholders and other service providers
- Availability of better and more up to date management information
- Consistent technological infrastructure and business architecture that supports the multiple customer access channels

We will judge our success by:

- A high recognition of the County Council and its access points
- Equality of access demonstrated by user profile
- Significantly reduced level of access difficulties/complaints and increased public satisfaction levels
- An 80% resolution of service enquiries/requests, first time at point of contact
- A shared approach to access across directorates and with partners to reduce referrals
- Access extended outside normal office hours
- Cost and performance in the upper quartile of public sector performance (with an assumption of cost neutral)
- Increased access volumes and lower response times
- A customer friendly culture, passion for customer service embedded within the Authority

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5   Funding

5.1   Currently the following main options are available for funding this phase of the development of the Customer Service Centre:

- From efficiency savings generated in Directorates which transfer services to the Customer Service Centre
- From the general efficiency savings target used to fund developments within the budget
- A mixture of the two

5.2   The option chosen will depend on whether the benefit of delivering services through the Customer Service Centre are to deliver efficiencies or to deliver enhanced services.

5.3   **Kings House and the Customer Service Centre**

It is proposed that the first year costs should be funded:

- From the Modernisation Fund (£250k 2006/07 and £250k 2007/08)

Future year costs should be funded:

- From efficiency savings delivered within Directorates achieved through re-engineering processes/back-office in conjunction with the Customer Service Centre
- From specific budget allocations where Members have approved the provision of enhanced services

The means of ensuring that budget allocations are made in a timely manner will be discussed with all groups as part of the 2007/08 Budget Process.

5.4   **E-Access Points**

It is proposed that this pilot should be funded as follows:

- Estimated £100k one-off set up costs from the Modernisation Fund
- Ongoing annual running costs from general efficiency savings within Directorates

5.5   **Potential Other Pilots**

It is proposed that the funding of other pilots is included within the business case for such pilots and a report submitted to a future Cabinet.

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6 Recommendations

6.1 That the Cabinet:

1 Approves the Customer Service and Access Strategy 2006-2009.

2 Supports the roll out of the next phase of development of the Customer Service Centre as outlined in this report.

3 Supports the development of a business case for an integrated Customer Service Centre and Joint One Stop Shops with Warwick District Council and recognises that one element of this aim can be delivered within existing capital and revenue resources through the development of a One Stop Shop at Shire Hall.

4 Recognises that the potential of the existing One Stop Shop at Kenilworth Library can be developed further.

5 Supports the development of a One Stop Shop at King's House Bedworth funded from within existing capital resources and the next phase of Customer Service Centre resources as per recommendation 2 above.

6 Supports a multi-site pilot of kiosks.

7 Supports the development of business cases for at least two more One Stop Shops, at least one of which will be located in an extended school.

8 That the funding for the programme be as follows:-

- Funding from the modernisation fund of £350k (£250k for Kings House and the Customer Service Centre and £100k for e-Access Points) in 2006/2007 and £250k in 2007/08 for Kings House and the Customer Service Centre

- Future year costs should be funded from either:

  o Efficiency savings delivered within Directorates achieved through re-engineering processes/back office in conjunction with the Customer Service Centre; or

  o Specific budget allocations where Members have approved the provision of enhanced services.

9 That all services which are capable of delivery through the Customer Service Centre, e-access and other forms of integrated customer service access points are reviewed from end to end by business process re-engineering to ensure that the benefits to customers and efficient service delivery are maximised.

Jim Graham   DAVID CARTER
Chief Executive   Strategic Director,
                                                   Performance & Development

Shire Hall
Warwick
5 June 2006

Warwickshire
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Results of Public Consultation 2003-2006

1   Public Consultation Summary

A summary of the Warwickshire Citizens' Panel consultation is set out below and is taken from Wave 10 (2003), Wave 16 (2005) and Wave 18 (2005) of the Citizen's Panel and the Public Satisfaction Survey 2005/06, full details of which are available on the Consultation database:

1.1   Future methods of contacting the County Council

- In 2003 there was clear evidence that internet/email access to the County Council is set to increase in all areas and in some instances to almost double current levels.

- By 2005 78% of respondents to the Citizens Panel said that they would definitely use the Internet in the future.

1.2   Contacting the Council – Public Satisfaction Survey 2005/06

- Within the last year, the most popular forms of contacting the County Council have been telephone (48% of respondents had phoned) and by visiting the County Council offices (23%). A further 20% had written to the County Council and 8% had e-mailed the County Council.

- Of those respondents who had telephoned the County Council, 68% were satisfied with the overall way their call was dealt with, whilst 15% were dissatisfied.

- More than one in five respondents, 21%, had visited the County Councils website in the last year, compared to 18% last year. Of these respondents, 78% were satisfied with the website, whilst 4% were dissatisfied. These results compare favourably to last year, when 70% of users were satisfied and 8% were dissatisfied.

1.3   Problems when contacting the Council

- In 2005
    - o 25% did not know who to contact.
    - o 24% did not know the telephone number/address/email
    - o 16% felt that the existing County/District/Borough Council offices were too far to travel to
    - o 11% felt that it would be too difficult for them to travel to existing council offices
    - o 10% felt that opening hours are inconvenient.
    - o 10% said staff were unhelpful

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1.4 One-Stop-Shops or separate offices for different services

- In 2003 One-Stop-shops were the preference of all demographic groups with 52% of respondents preferring them compared with 16% who prefer separate offices.
- In 2005 88% of respondents felt that One Stop Shops would be a good place to access Council services
- 71% of respondents also felt that as One Stop Shops would be a local service they would not need to travel anywhere else to find out about any council service
- 91% felt that they should be able to obtain information about a range of services from both County and District/Borough Councils

1.5 Convenient locations for One-Stop-Shops:

- In 2005 44% of respondents would travel 1-2 miles, 30% would travel 3-4 miles to visit a One Stop Shop
- In 2005 81% of respondents preferred libraries, 54% community centres, 42% post offices, 29% supermarkets, 31% Job centres, 29% Leisure Centres

1.6 Convenient times for visiting One-Stop-Shops

- In 2003 there was clear preference for an out of office hours service.
- 69% prefer a weekday with 40% preference for after 5.00 pm. 50% say the weekend would be convenient with a slight preference for Saturdays.

1.7 Internet and email access:

- In 2003 61% of respondents had used Internet; 52% at home, 31% at work, 5% at a library and 4% at school or college. 50% were comfortable using email.
- In 2005 us of the Internet had increased to 69% at home, 43% at work, 11% at the library, and 6% at school. Overall 73% of respondents were comfortable using the Internet.

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Customer Service & Access Strategy 2006-09

Draft

Warwickshire County Council

Working for Warwickshire

Contents

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Working for Warwickshire

1.0   Foreword

This document outlines Warwickshire County Council's vision for customer service over the next three years.

It has been written as a high level, internal document with the intention of building staff and Member awareness and engagement in the first instance, before developing a Customer Charter towards the end of 2006/07, which will establish the standards and services our customers can expect.

The Council is a complex organisation with a large number of front-facing services, each with a significant number of units offering specialist services, advice and support to customers. This Strategy aims to put the customer at the heart of everything the Council does. It recognises the importance of the customers' needs and attempts to ensure that our services are driven and shaped by all those who live, work and visit Warwickshire by embedding a passion for customer focus across the organisation.

The Strategy will capitalise on the opportunity to deliver existing and new services cost effectively, by understanding and re-engineering our back and front office processes from end to end. We will apply a rigorous and systematic performance and evaluation framework and we will identify the efficiency savings which arise.

We recognise that the structure and organisation of the Council is not as important to our customers as their experience when accessing Council services. It is the ease of accessibility, quality and speed of response that counts and this Strategy and its associated projects and initiatives aim to improve significantly the quality of customer experience in Warwickshire.

This Strategy is not just about transforming access to our services. We will need to develop joint access approaches with our partners, including District and Borough Councils, Police, PCTs etc to develop the gateway to enhance the experience of, public services in Warwickshire.

The undersigned are fully committed to the successful achievement of the Vision and Strategic objectives as set out in this Strategy:

Cllr Alan Farnell   _____(Leader of the Council)

Cllr June Tandy   _____(Leader of the Labour Party)

Cllr Jerry Roodhouse _____(Leader of the Liberal Democrats Party)

Jim Graham   _____(Chief Executive, Warwickshire County Council)

Graeme Betts   _____(Strategic Director, Adult, Health & Community Services)

William Brown   _____(Strategic Director, Community Protection)

David Carter   _____ (Strategic Director, Performance & Development)

David Clarke   _____(Strategic Director, Resources)

Marion Davis   _____(Strategic Director, Children, Young People & Families)

John Deegan   _____(Strategic Director, Environment & Economy)

2.0   Our Vision

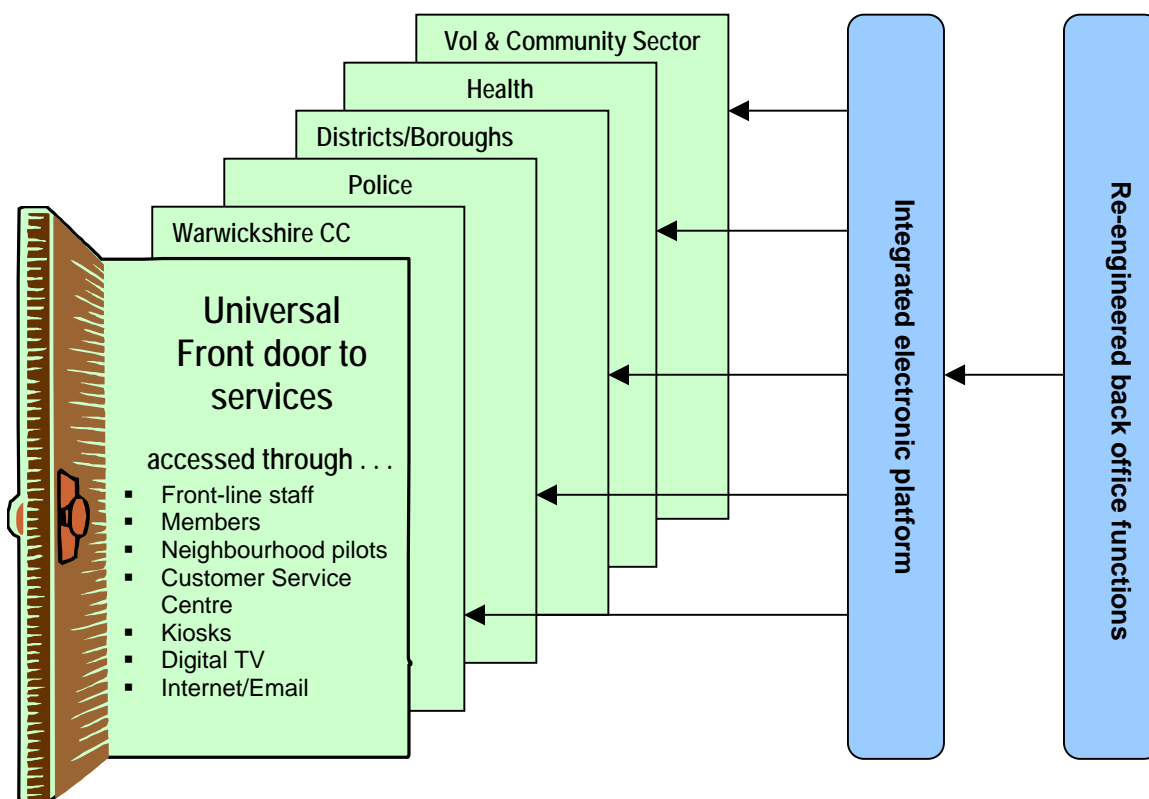Our Vision for public services in Warwickshire is set out below:

> ### Putting our Customers First;
>
> ### Improving Services; and Leading our Communities

We are changing the way we work to ensure that our customers receive the best possible service through a medium that is most appropriate and convenient for them. The Customer Service & Access Strategy has implications for both 'front facing' and 'back office' services and the aims and targets within this document are shared across the whole Authority.

We have developed a 'New Ways of Working Programme' which draws together the key elements and resources (ICT, Property, HR, Finance etc) within our organisation which will be needed to realise the Vision and outlines how, through re-engineering of these processes, we can improve the experience received by our customers by delivering more efficient and effective services.

We recognise that this work will lead to significant changes to the way we deliver services to our customers and therefore in how our directorates operate. To reflect this we have also developed a significant and challenging workstream dedicated to addressing the issues and challenges arising from a change in our organisational culture. This will ensure that a passion for customer focus becomes embedded within Warwickshire County Council and is exemplified in our behaviour and daily interactions with our customers.

The inter-relationship of these work areas is outlined in the diagram below, which introduces the concept of a 'Universal front-door', providing consistent and integrated access to public services, across a broad spectrum of access channels. The potential impact of this approach on the experience of our customers is set out in **Appendix 1.**

Vol & Community Sector

Health

Districts/Boroughs

Police

Warwickshire CC

Universal
Front door to
services

accessed through . . .
- Front-line staff
- Members
- Neighbourhood pilots
- Customer Service Centre
- Kiosks
- Digital TV
- Internet/Email

Integrated electronic platform

Re-engineered back office functions

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## 3.0 Why do we need a Customer Service and Access Strategy?

This strategy recognises that there are many possible contact mechanisms available and that our customers should be offered access to services using the method of their choice, at a time and place to suit them.

Analysis of customer feedback has highlighted the difficulties some of our customers face when trying to contact us and access our services and it is recognised that a customer who struggles to identify and/or contact any service provider is likely to retain a poor image of the Council and convey that dissatisfaction to others.

We want to improve the way our customers access our services, but also develop and shape the service they receive. For Warwickshire County Council this is about more than just bricks and mortar and providing the physical access points. It is about the whole Service experience and the conduct and behaviour of the staff who provide it.

4.0 Where have we come from?

Like many large organisations and in particular, local authorities, Warwickshire County Council has, until recently delivered its services through a range of service-specific access points as illustrated in the Model below:
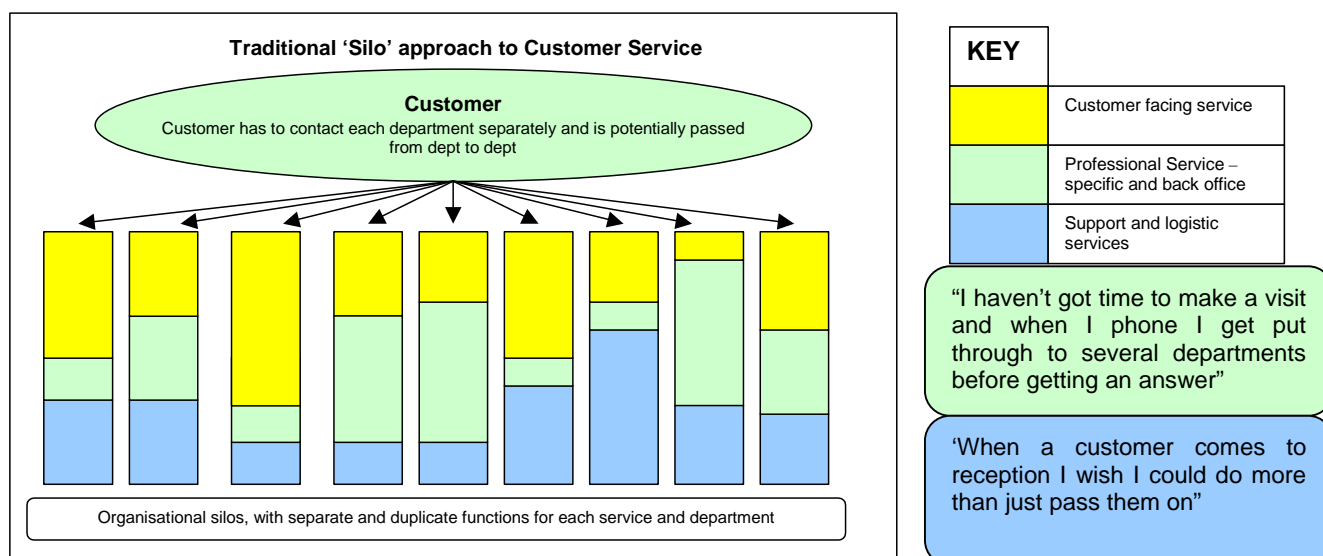
5.0 Where do we want to be?

Across the County there are pockets of strong partnership working and we want to develop these relationships both on an intra and inter-organisational basis. In future we will provide one point of contact for the accurate and consistent resolution of the vast majority of services and related enquiries. Value for Money services will be available at convenient times, through a wider choice of access channels. This is illustrated in the model below:
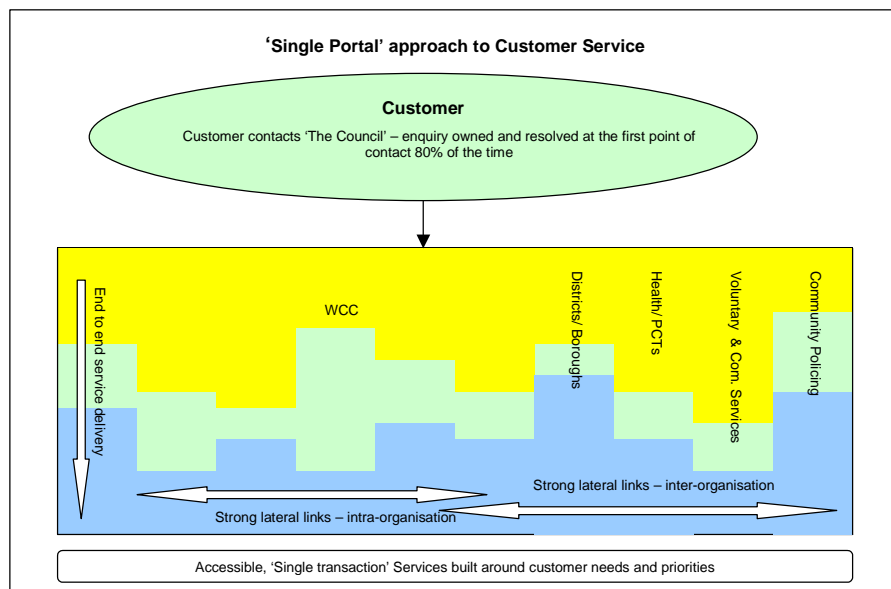
6.0 How do we get there?

To support the achievement of our Vision five Themes have been identified which set out the key areas which we will address in redesigning the customer experience. It is through these themes that the detailed action plans, objectives and targets for of the Customer Service & Access Strategy will sit.

Putting our Customers First;

Improving Services; and Leading our Communities

through:

1. **Efficient, effective and customer–focused processes**

2. **Customer driven technology**

3. **Localised services and solutions**

4. **Empowered, committed and customer–focused staff**

5. **Working in partnership with all public service providers in Warwickshire**

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These themes have been developed following detailed consideration by all Strategic Directors and Heads of Service of the issues surrounding customer service, based upon an analysis of recognised best practice and public consultation feedback.

The following section highlights the strategic issues and drivers for each of the five key themes.

It is envisaged that the high level issues set out below will inform the project work which leads to the delivery of the associated Theme. Detail of this is provided in **Appendix 2.**

6.1   Theme 1 – Efficient, effective and customer–focused processes

Changing current work processes will be the single biggest and far reaching project of this Strategy and we are currently developing clear plans to address this. Gaining a detailed understanding of our front-facing and back-office processes from end to end will take a significant effort, but will allow us ultimately to deliver services in a cost effective and efficient way.

A key element of the Strategy is the implementation of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution. CRM can help to optimise service delivery mechanisms; enable better understanding of the customer and provide a more joined up service. CRM can support a front/back office split that allows employees with the best customer interfacing skills to spend more time using those skills.

CRM will provide clear 'trackable' data on all customers and for the first time detailed data of all service activity. It will be capable of analysis to provide information, which will enable a more proactive approach to customer priorities and engagement.

The Council's services will be presented to the customer through 'One Universal Front Door', behind which partner services are seamlessly integrated. As many services as possible should be capable of delivery through any contact point ie. Front line staff, Members, the Customer Service Centre, the Internet, neighbourhood pilots, kiosks, text, email and digital TV.

The improved Customer Service and Access and Efficiency Savings which the Council wishes to achieve, can only be delivered if the Customer Service Centre / One Stop Shop's are recognised as a seamless part of each service. This can only be done if the whole of the service is re-engineered from end to end.

If the Customer Service Centre is simply a different front end for services which otherwise continue to operate in exactly the same way, we will not achieve the Council's objectives.

We need to establish a medium term financial planning structure to facilitate longer-term service improvement and delivery. In addition to this other, funding streams over and above the efficiency gains made through re-engineering our processes need to be established and delivered.

We will need to align the cross-cutting strategies of Property, ICT, Finance, Human Resources, Organisational Development, Communication, Planning, Community Governance to our Vision for Customer Services.

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6.2 Theme 2 – Customer driven technology

Technology is key to the implementation of the improvement plan and strategy. The BPR outlined above must take place first before some of the technological solutions that underpin our 'new way of working' can be implemented.

CRM will be used by all staff to improve the quality and consistency of the customer experience. To do this, the Council will aim to answer as many of the customer service requests as possible from the first point of contact. The Council's knowledge and systems need to be available to customers through all relevant delivery channels, including front line staff, customer service centres, one stop shops, the Internet, neighbourhood pilots, kiosks, text and digital TV.

Excellent customer service can only be delivered where employees have been provided with excellent and accessible information. An early requirement will be to rationalise our customer data approach and manage it at a single point so that the customer will be able to view and interact with the Council as a single entity.

6.3 Theme 3 - Localised services and solutions

We will provide services that are accessible to all sections of the community and work to ensure that we engage groups or individuals who have previously been excluded or are most in need of help. Our actions should contribute to the creation of a fair, inclusive and cohesive community.

Telephone contact is the preferred medium for a significant majority of our customers. However, as outlined in the diagram below, other channels are used and these need to be improved and maintained to cater for those customers wishing to use them. We will seek to achieve the appropriate balance between access channels which increase human interaction and cost and those which increase convenience and accessibility.

This Strategy will address the need to provide and maintain consistency across all the Access Channels to ensure equality of service and experience for our customers, through the application of enabling technology and re-alignment of existing delivery processes.
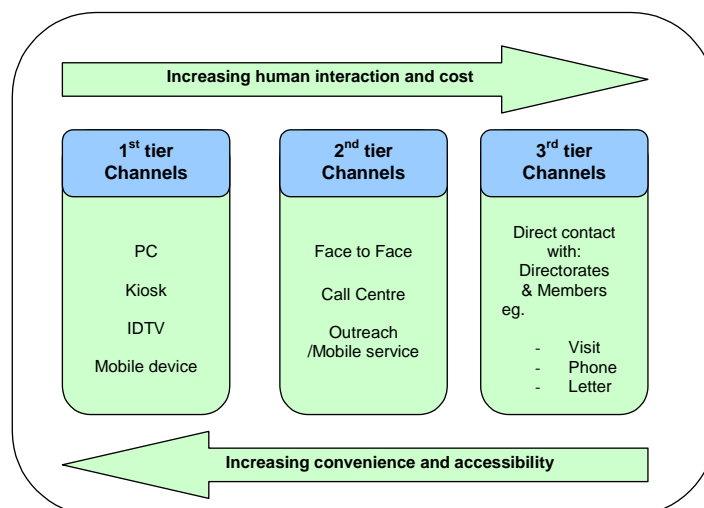
In developing the opportunity for face to face interaction the Council will work in partnership with District/Borough Councils, Health, Police, Community agencies and Commercial businesses to identify opportunities to provide physical access to public services across Warwickshire.

6.4   Theme 4 – Empowered, committed and customer–focused staff

Implementation of this strategy is dependent on bringing new beliefs, attitudes and ways of working into the Council.

This will be achieved through a systematic programme that sets out explicit expectations of all staff and senior managers, which embed and reinforce a passion for customer focus. All employees need to be able to make the connection between our vision, the work they do and the tools they're given to perform their role.

A customer care training and development programme initially for frontline employees is key to the successful implementation of this Strategy. Customer services training will be developed and rolled out across the organisation. All new employees will receive customer services training as part of their corporate induction to the Council.

We will need to align current approaches to management/staff development programmes and competency frameworks to ensure that they reflect 'customer first' principles and standards. It is important that the development programmes build on our ability to assess and manage risks and support the delivery of change at pace.

Staff and Member Training and development is key to the successful implementation of this Strategy and all new employees will receive customer care training as part of their corporate induction to the Council.

We will need to integrate the 'customer first' principles and standards within the Corporate Organisational Development and Human Resource strategies to emphasise the importance of shared customer care standards.

6.5   Theme 5 – Working in partnership with all public service providers in Warwickshire

A partnership approach will be required with other public service providers to simplify and clarify public access and understanding.

There are many opportunities to work in partnership with others both within Warwickshire as well as neighbouring authorities, voluntary and private providers. The benefits that such solutions can bring should not be underestimated and, as this Strategy develops, we will work with others to find solutions that enable services provided by the Council and partner agencies to be seamlessly integrated.

This will be achieved through a systematic programme that sets out how Warwickshire's partnership capacity is to be increased and citizen/customer outcomes achieved. Our role may be as much about enabling self starting and supporting as well as leading on service delivery.

We will need to integrate the 'customer first' principles and standards within the developing Local Area Agreement.

Councils performing their community leadership roles will have good local intelligence about their areas and communities. The critical success factors required to support Elected Members as customer/community champions will be explored and developed as part of the implementation programme.

7.0   Contact & Feedback channels

For more information please contact . . .

Kushal Birla
Head of Customer Service & Access
(01926) 416362

Appendix 1 – The future of public service provision in Warwickshire . . .

Janice started using the **Internet** to help her son Jake find pictures and information for a project on frogs that he did at primary school. The turning point was when the teacher suggested that she might like to use the **computers (PCs) in the mobile library** by St Peter's Church or the community centre on the high street. The library service has trained staff to provide personal assistance for new or tentative users and helped Janice to print off the images from the **Internet**. Janice still pops in to see them when she has problems.

John and Barbara have noticed how readily you can access a PC these days. They use the ones in both the local **supermarkets** to access community information and council services and recently discovered the same service in the **Doctor's waiting room**.

Pat suffers from restricted mobility and prefers to telephone the council's **Customer Service Centre** in the evening or on weekends when she has time to look at her other bills etc. This digitally supported service with trained advisors resolve customer problems through the first contact in 80 percent of cases and queries can be passed on in a consistent manner.

Steve prefers to deal with people **face to face** and has the time to visit the **One-Stop-Shop** over the road from his office in his lunch hour**.** He receives a similar service to that offered by the Customer Service Centre, but gets to know the staff and customers who he now meets regularly with after work.

Jim Mason goes to record the birth of his first son Jonathan. He is amazed to find that the registration process will, if he agrees, ensure that he receives Child Benefit, an increase in Housing and Council Tax Benefit, update the family's GP patient list, and inform school records. He will also receive information on who to contact for guidance on choosing and the availability of childcare (should he require it) as well as information on funding/tax credits that may be available to help him pay for childcare. Each of these systems will in turn recognise the new data and process it in appropriate ways, perhaps by awarding additional benefit or triggering, in a few years' time, a call from the Children's Information Service, to Jim, reminding him that he will be able to secure free early education for Jonathan and offering to guide him through the process either by phone or by meeting face-to-face in his local Children's Centre.

After much encouragement from the children the Thomson family now have **interactive digital television** (with a feedback loop) and enjoy the additional channels on offer. Mr Thompson could never remember whether street lighting was the responsibility of the District or County Council and so when lights on their street went out, didn't bother to report it. However the next time it happened his wife remembered an advert she had seen in the information pack which was sent with the Council tax letter and was able to report the fault directly through the television.

Bill has lived all his life in a rural community to the south of the county and has recently retired. On a recent trip to London his daughter used a **self-service kiosk** to find directions to the hotel she was staying in. When visiting Bill she noticed that a similar kiosk had been set up in his village shop. With encouragement from his daughter, Bill started to use the kiosk to confirm bus times and has recently used it to apply for his free bus pass.

Sheila finds it a struggle to cope with her Mums personal care because the only bathroom facilities are upstairs and a stroke has left Constance unable to get upstairs unaided. After work one evening Sheila realises she cannot cope any longer without help and decides to phone Adult, Health and Community Services.
The Customer Services Centre is able to confirm that Constance is eligible for help with her personal care. The Advisor takes all necessary details and passes them onto a Social Work Team for further action. Sheila is reassured by the Advisor's sensitive handling of the situation that a Social Worker would provide the help and advice necessary to improve the situation.

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Appendix 2 - Headlines for action

NB. Please note that this table is intended as a high level summary which will be supported by detailed project plans for each workstream, to be developed once budget and resources have been agreed **so at this stage the content is indicative rather than definitive at this stage.**

Theme	We will . . .	So our Customers will . . .	We will know we have got there when . . .
Theme 1 - *Efficient, effective and customer–focused processes*	• Re-engineer our Business Processes from end to end • Adopt a longer term, business and financial planning structure • Develop and operate a robust performance and evaluation framework to measure and evidence service improvements and value for money	• Receive value for money services • Benefit from seamless service provision • Receive services that are responsive to their needs	
Theme 2 - *Customer driven technology*	• Use Customer Relationship Management (CRM) technology • Rationalise customer data	• Have 80% of all enquiries/service requests dealt with at the first point of contact • Benefit from improved quality and consistency of their chosen delivery method	
Theme 3 - *Localised services and solutions*	• Ensure access points are convenient • Review and match opening hours to need • Develop shared customer care standards • Recognise that people have different needs and requirements	• Be able to access a range of services through generically trained staff • Receive generic services within a localised context • Receive services where they want them when they want them • Have equal access to the services provided by the Council	• 80% overall customer satisfaction with services • 80% of enquires to the council are dealt with at the first point of contact • 95% answer rate for telephone calls • Evidence of efficiency savings
Theme 4 - *Empowered, committed and customer–focused staff*	• Deliver a customer focused culture across the Council • Listen to our customers using consultation and mystery shopping techniques • Deliver management/staff development programmes to reflect 'customer first' business principles and standards	• Benefit from a consistent, reliable and responsive service • Inform future service delivery and priorities • Benefit from confident staff who make decisions and resolve problems	
Theme 5 - *Working in partnership with all public service providers in Warwickshire*	• Commit to partnership working where it makes sense for the customer • Integrate 'customer first' principles and standards to the developing Local Area Agreement • Provide appropriate support to elected members in developing their community leadership role	• Benefit from simplified and a responsive service proposition • Benefit from improved services that are relevant to a local context	

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