

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Cabinet

Date of Committee 7 September 2006

Report Title **Delivering the Customer Service & Access Strategy – Progress report and Direction of Travel**

Summary This reports sets out the progress made against the Customer Service & Access Strategy following its approval on 27th June, 2006 and outlines the direction of travel over the next six months.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No

Background papers Customer Service Access Strategy – Cabinet 27 June 2006

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 Sarah Boad
Cllr Colin Hayfield

Cabinet Member Cllr Peter Fowler

Chief Executive Jim Graham

Legal David Carter

- Finance
- Other Chief Officers David Clarke
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals Charles Holden
Chris Juckes

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

Cabinet - 7 September 2006

Delivering the Customer Service & Access Strategy – Progress report and Direction of Travel

Report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- Endorse progress made with development of the:
 - One Stop Shop pilots
 - Business Cases for the One Stop Shop pilots
 - Business Process Re-engineering activity
 - Warwickshire County Council/Warwick District Council Joint Customer Service Centre
- Endorse the current Direction of Travel to deliver the Customer Service & Access Strategy.
- Approve the making of £27,000 capital grant in 2006/07 to fund the extension to be occupied by the Police at the planned One Stop Shop in Whitnash.
- Approve Warwickshire County Council's participation with North Warwickshire Borough Council in a joint One Stop Shop and a further report being submitted to Cabinet on the 2nd November 2006 to consider options for funding.

1.0 Background

On 27th June Cabinet considered and approved the Customer Service & Access Strategy.

The Strategy outlines Warwickshire County Council's vision for customer service over the next three years. It aims to put the customer at the heart of everything the Council does. It recognises the importance of 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.

To support the achievement of the Vision, five themes have been identified which set out the key areas which we will address with respect to the redesigning of the customer experience. These are set out overleaf, and it is through these themes that the detailed action plans, objectives and targets for 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**

This approach capitalises 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. The Strategy recognises 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 the associated projects and initiatives aim to improve significantly the quality of customer experience in Warwickshire.

2.0 Previous Cabinet resolution

Following agreement of the Customer Service & Access Strategy at the meeting on 27th June, it was resolved that the Cabinet:

1. Supported the roll out of the next phase of development of the Customer Service Centre as outlined in the report.
2. Supported the development of a business case for an integrated Customer Service Centre and Joint One Stop Shop with Warwick District Council and recognised 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.
3. Recognised that the potential of the existing One Stop Shop at Kenilworth Library can be developed further.

4. Supported the development of a One Stop Shop at King's House Bedworth funded from within existing resources and the next phase of Customer Service Centre resources as per recommendation 2 above.
5. Supported a multi-site pilot of kiosks.
6. Supported 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.
7. Agreed 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:
 - Efficiency savings delivered within Directorates achieved through re-engineering processes/back office in conjunction with the Customer Service Centre; or
 - Specific budget allocations where Members have approved the provision of enhanced services
8. Agreed 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.

3.0 Objectives of this report

In response to the above resolutions, this report seeks to:

- Provide a progress report on the development of the:
 - One Stop Shop pilots
 - Business Cases
 - Business Process Re-engineering activity
 as set out in Section 2 and previously agreed by Cabinet
- Set out the current Direction of Travel to deliver the Customer Service & Access Strategy
- Gain Cabinet approval to the making of £27,000 capital grant towards a Warwick District Council project to fund an extension to be occupied by the Police at the planned One Stop Shop in Whitnash. The cost is to be met by virement of the surplus capital resources from the Winton House, Stratfords accommodation scheme.
- Gain Cabinet approval for Warwickshire County Council's participation with North Warwickshire Borough Council in a joint One Stop Shop

4.0 Progress on approved Neighbourhood pilots/One Stop Shops

The following section provides a progress report on the three neighbourhood pilots that were agreed by Cabinet on 27th June. It is intended that five pilots should be operational by March 2007 and subsequent sections within this report will address the response to the requirement for a further two pilots.

4.1 Kings House One Stop Shop

4.1.1 The development of a One Stop Shop at Kings House is the most advanced of all the pilots. It is envisaged that the facility will be operational by late September/early October, when Customer Service staff will be in place to respond to public enquiries and provide the following facilities and services:

- Customer Service Staff with access to the Customer Service Centre software and signposting information
- Confidential meeting room with PC, Internet and printing facility
- Comfortable seating area
- Accessible toilet with baby changing facilities
- Refreshments
- Plasma screen with Warwickshire County Council service information and local advertising
- Reception facility for services located within Kings House
- Corporately branded look and feel
- Registration of births, deaths and marriages

4.1.2 Initially the One Stop Shop will focus on the resolution of enquiries relating to Warwickshire County Council services, whilst signposting customers where enquiries relate to other agencies within the area. However as the profile of the service is raised and through ongoing discussions with Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council it is envisaged that a broader range of multi-agency services will be resolved at the first point of contact, at the Kings House One Stop Shop.

4.1.3 In addition to the advice and signposting service, the County Registration Service will be moving from their current location in Bedworth to provide a service on two half-days per week from the confidential meeting room allowing customers to register births, deaths and marriages on site.

4.2 Shire Hall One Stop Shop

4.2.1 The provision of a One Stop Shop facility at Shire Hall is part of a package of integrated services planned to be provided across the District in partnership with Warwick District Council.

4.2.2 An initial project meeting has been held with representatives from Warwick District Council, Resources and Performance & Development Directorates. This meeting has been used to scope out the desired service and facility requirements which will subsequently inform the feasibility study.

4.2.3 This study will inform consideration of the options by all stakeholders to ensure that a facility is provided by March 2007.

4.3 Progress report on Interactive Kiosks

4.3.1 Following agreement of a pilot of interactive Kiosks by Cabinet, presentations from the provider have been received by the Warwickshire Direct Partnership Board and a meeting of District/Borough and County Council representatives, outlining the capability of the interactive kiosks. At the latter meeting the following, broad principles were agreed:

- Kiosks will need to be provided in both rural and urban locations to build up consumer knowledge and awareness
- The number of kiosks launched will be enough to raise and sustain their profile
- A marketing campaign will be needed to achieve 'reach' and cultivate demand
- Kiosk locations will be carefully selected, based upon existing and local knowledge
- Content will be flexible and compatible with existing websites and databases
- Kiosks will be delivered in the context of all other access channels
- Wireless Fidelity broadband access (a local area network that uses high frequency radio signals) will be considered as a secondary option

4.3.2 Rugby Borough Council have expressed an interest in participating in the pilot use of these kiosks and an initial scoping meeting has been held to progress this opportunity. Subject to agreement by both authorities five kiosks could be operational by early next year.

5.0 Progress report on approved Business Cases

The following section provides a progress report on the three Business Cases, the development of which was agreed by Cabinet on 27th June. These relate to the provision of further two neighbourhood pilots and the ongoing partnership development with Warwick District Council in relation to the provision of a joint customer service centre and a number of One Stop Shops within the District.

5.1 Extended Services in Schools Business Case

5.1.1 Following early discussions with the Extended Schools Team, it was recommended that the existing infrastructure and service provision at Stockingford Early Years Centre and Library would provide an opportunity to develop a One Stop Shop service on the same site.

5.1.2 Subsequently an initial project meeting has been held at Stockingford where it was evident that there were clear and exciting synergies between the objectives of the Every Child Matters and One Stop Shop agendas.

Discussions centred around the phased delivery of potential services to the community in and around Stockingford.

- 5.1.3 To ensure involvement of all the associated schools a meeting will be convened in early September, to engage all potential stakeholders in a detailed feasibility assessment. It is envisaged that a Business Case will be presented to the Cabinet for approval in December.

5.2 Whitnash One Stop Shop

- 5.2.1 On 7 February 2006, Council approved an allocation of £154,000 capital to support the relocation of the Register Office in Stratford upon Avon. The allocation was based on an estimate provided by Property Services for an earlier plan of relocating the Register Office from 7 Rother Street to 8 Rother Street. In the event space was not available at 8 Rother Street and in May 2006, the Register Office was successfully moved to Winton House, Church Street in Stratford upon Avon. The total cost was £64,830 leaving a residue of £89,170 underspent.

- 5.2.2 It is proposed that part of the capital underspend identified above be used to fund the extension to be occupied by the Police at the planned One Stop Shop at Whitnash. The Police would pay a market rent for leasing the premises. The estimated cost of the extension is £27,000 and it would be recouped as part of the market rental over a period of 10 years.

5.3 Warwickshire County Council/Warwick District Council Joint Customer Service Centre

- 5.3.1 The proposals to develop a joint Customer Service Centre to service both Warwick District and Warwickshire County Councils' enquiries is crucial to the proposed provision of a package of integrated services for the two authorities.
- 5.3.2 Work has begun on the development of business cases which outline the potential costs and benefits of this scheme alongside the development of the One Stop Shops in Kenilworth (existing), Warwick (See Section 4.2), Whitnash and Leamington Spa. The potential benefits of such integration are matched by the complexity in terms of the feasibility analysis and it is therefore anticipated that a full report and business case will be put to the Cabinet early next year.

6.0 Business Process Re-engineering and Service Evaluation

- 6.1 On 27th July the Strategic Directors Management Team (SDMT) agreed the inclusion of Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) as an additional workstream within the New Ways of Working Programme. A working group has been set up to progress the development of this activity, taking an organisation-wide approach to improvement.
- 6.2 Progress on the BPR activity will be monitored through the existing framework for New Ways of Working Programme to ensure that both SDMT and Cabinet are regularly updated on performance.

7.0 Position Statement & Direction of Travel

7.1 The table below summarises the updates provided within this report and sets out the current position of each of the One Stop Shop and and/or Neighbourhood pilot projects currently being progressed through the Customer Service & Access Strategy:

One Stop shop/ Neighbourhood pilot	Partners (In addition to WCC)	Funding status	Status
Kenilworth	Warwick DC	N/A	Operational
Kings House, Bedworth	TBC	Agreed	Expected operational late September/early October 2006
Interactive kiosk pilot	Rugby BC	Agreed	Expected operational by early next year
Shire Hall, Warwick	Warwick DC	Part of WCC/WDC joint customer service centre business case/bid	Approved – expected operational by March 2007
Whitnash	Warwick DC, Police, Town Council		Approved – expected operational by March 2007
Leamington	Warwick DC		Business case to be developed
Stockingford Extended Services in Schools	TBC	TBC	Business case to be developed

7.2 Through discussion and dialogue with our partner authorities and agencies the Customer Service & Access agenda within Warwickshire is gaining momentum. To date, all District and Borough Councils within Warwickshire have approached, or been approached by the County Council to establish the feasibility of delivering joint service access within the respective district/borough council.

7.3 The table below outlines three further potential One Stop Shop projects, in addition to those set out in Section 7.1. Although these are at the early stages of development their consideration should be seen as a reflection of the commitment within the County to improve access to public services:

One Stop shop	Partners (In addition to WCC)	Funding status	Status
Nuneaton Town Hall	Nuneaton & Bedworth BC	TBC – Business case to be developed	Early discussions with Borough Council representatives
The Grange, Southam	Stratford DC	TBC – Business case to be developed	Early discussions with District representatives
North Warwickshire Borough Council House	North Warwickshire BC	Capital/ Revenue required from Warwickshire County Council	Early discussions with District representatives

8.0 One Stop Shop proposal at Atherstone

- 8.1 North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) are currently considering a scheme to remodel the Council House reception area to provide a One Stop Shop. Paragon Interior Groups plc (the same Company that worked on the Kenilworth One Stop Shop) have been awarded the design and build contract
- 8.2 The Borough has asked the County Council to consider providing a joint One Stop Shop to the public. The Borough is asking for a capital contribution of £60,000 and £25,000 ongoing revenue to fund one member of staff. The total cost of the building work is £180,000 and the Borough will fund 3 members of staff. NWBC will be presenting the business case to the Executive Board for a decision regarding the funding of this project on the 25th September 2006. If the Borough Council approves the project on the 25th of September a further report will be submitted to Cabinet on the 2nd November 2006 to consider the options for funding.
- 8.3 The One Stop Shop will provide a fast track meet and greet area, advisors to deal with specific queries or requests for service, interview rooms for the public and for use by eg the CABx, computers for use by visitors to access the website and encourage self service, space for the Planning divisions microfiche reader that provides information on planning and building regulation applications.

8.4 The benefits of working jointly with the Borough on this scheme would include:-

- Pooling resources to improve services to customers
- Joined up service delivery for both authorities through a common front door, seamless and transparent.
- Opportunity to review our joint Customer Relationship Management approaches with a view to reducing transaction costs.
- Removal of customer confusion on 'which Council does what'
- Sharing of skills and knowledge in the development of One Stop Shop processes, removing service, geographical and professional barriers.

9.0 Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- Consider progress made with development of the:
 - One Stop Shop pilots
 - Business Cases for the One Stop Shop pilots
 - Business Process Re-engineering activity
- Consider the current Direction of Travel to deliver the Customer Service & Access Strategy.
- Approve the making of £27,000 capital grant in 2006/07 to fund the extension to be occupied by the Police at the planned One Stop Shop in Whitnash.
- Approve Warwickshire County Council's participation with North Warwickshire Borough Council in a joint One Stop Shop and a further report being submitted to Cabinet on the 2nd November 2006 to consider options for funding.

10.0 Further information

For further information on any of the highlighted projects or issues raised, please contact Kushal Birla, Head of Customer Service & Access on 01926 412013 or e-mail kushalbirla@warwickshre.gov.uk.

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18 August 2006