AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee	**Overview And Scrutiny Board**
Date of Committee	**10th November 2010**
Report Title	**Update Report - Progress on the One Front Door Programme**
Summary	Good progress has been made on setting the strategic context and understanding the wider implications of the One Front Door agenda. This has been supplemented by significant, detailed research on services, customers, communities and respective demographics.
For further information please contact:	Kushal Birla Head of Customer Service and Communications Customers Workforce and Governance Directorate Tel: 01926 412013
Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?	No.
Background papers	One Front Door Project Initiation Document Warwickshire One Front Door Interim Report Customer Service and Access Strategy 2010 - 2013

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-   Details to be specified

Other Committees	☐	
Local Member(s)	☐	
Other Elected Members	☒	Cllr Tandy and Cllr Roodhouse
Cabinet Member	☒	Cllr Farnell, Cllr Hayfield, Cllr Butlin, Cllr Timms
Chief Executive	☐	
Legal	☒	
Finance	☒	

Other Strategic Directors	☒	David Clarke, Strategic Director, Resources
District Councils	☐	
Health Authority	☐	
Police	☐	
Other Bodies/Individuals	☒	Steve Smith, Tonino Cuiffini, Phil Evans, Hugh Disley, Martin Stott, Simon Robson, Marcus Herron, Nick Gower-Johnson,Ron Williamson

FINAL DECISION

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

Agenda No

Overview And Scrutiny Board - 10th November 2010.

Update Report - Progress on the One Front Door Programme

Report of the Strategic Director, Customers Workforce and Governance

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Recommendation

That the Board considers and comments on the progress of the One Front Door Programme.

1.0   Background

1.1   The One Front Door project was commissioned to identify ways in which the Warwickshire public are provided with improved access to public services that take account of the diversity of local needs and preferences across Warwickshire. The channels through which the public access services, (be that via telephone, online, in person, or via other means), are a critical part of public service provision, and there is an ongoing impetus for them to be managed effectively and efficiently for everyone.

1.2   The pressure on public finances makes it imperative that savings are made in all aspects of councils' activities, and the number and use of public buildings has been identified as an area where economies can be made. The rationalisation of buildings does not conflict with the objective of providing improved access to public services and will be, in fact, a useful driver in the implementation of channel shift and the appropriate deployment of resources in accordance with need.

1.3   The Coalition Government's reforms means that services that were, in the past, delivered within the strict operational boundaries of the various public sector organisations will, in the future, be re-shaped and delivered through a much more collaborative and joined-up local public/community sector network. This will mean radical change for many services, with a greater focus placed on citizen outcomes coupled with a more holistic view of the activity needed to deliver those outcomes. These changes need to be taken into account in the design of the future service access model.

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1.4   In order to meet the needs of customers, we must provide service access that is:

- Easily accessible
- Simple to use
- Streamlined
- Convenient
- Cost effective
- Robust

It is also important to bear in mind the target audience's access to technology, the type and complexity of the contact, their personal preferences as well their skill sets when selecting channels. This may also include our outreach work where front-line colleagues in contact with our customers have the ability to provide or sign-post to other services that the customer may need. This includes our partners in Schools and Colleges, Police, Health, Borough and District Councils, and the Voluntary Sector.

2.0   Progress

2.1   To date the focus of the work on the programme has centred around customers of public services in Warwickshire, their preferences for service access and the demographic variations that exist across the County. In order to provide an up to date strategic context for the work the Customer Service and Access Strategy was reviewed and refreshed.

2.2   Research into the current use of the various access channels (face to face, telephone, online etc) revealed that collection of customer access data, the channels used, the volumes of service requests/provision and information about the customer varies considerably depending on the service. These inconsistencies prevent a complete picture being built of the relative use of the various access channels for specific services and types of service. There were exceptions to this, such as the CSC, some One Stop Shops, Libraries, Family Information Service, Children's Centres and Highways Services, and some indication of customer use and preference was gleaned from this.

2.3   In view of the lack of actual customer data for many services and access channels, the project team have relied for evidence primarily on the analysis of Mosaic data and locality profile data. The data shows that many of our population will use the internet to access services whenever they can. Telephone access is also popular, with postal access and face to face less preferred.

2.4   Analysis of the data at a locality level, however, shows significant deviations from the overall picture in some localities and for some groups with, for instance, face to face being the most preferred method of access. It is important to acknowledge the differences in locality preferences within strategic proposals to re-engineer access to front line services. It is also considered important not to disenfranchise any minority groups, so provision of all appropriate access methods should be available for every service.

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2.5 Research and analysis of data has pointed to the need to:

- o Provide online access for more services
- o Increase the functionality of online services
- o Promote the use of more efficient and economic access channels
- o Locate face to face facilities in accordance with the needs and level of demand of specific demographic groups – usually the most vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.
- o Co-locate face to face facilities with other services that interface with the public (public, community and voluntary) where possible and practical
- o Collect standard customer and service data for every front-facing service

2.6 Increased online service access has the potential to deliver significant savings to both customers and public service providers, as the relative cost per interaction is shown in the table below:

Access Channel	Cost to Serve per Interaction
Online	£0.22 to £0.56
Telephone	£1.28 to £5.57
Face to Face	£4.83 to £9.56

Data Source SOCITM 2009/10

Work is currently on-going to identify those services where online access is appropriate, and what level of functionality could be practically offered. This exercise will be followed by an evaluation of the development costs against the savings/benefits to determine the way forward. Realising the full potential of improved online access, however, will be dependent on a number of infrastructure projects such as single customer accounts, identity management, systems integration and online payments. As some of these infrastructure projects are in their infancy, delivery of significant savings/benefits across a wide range of services is not a short term project.

2.7 The provision, and subsequent migration, of customers to new/more efficient access channels will have an impact on the demand for face to face access. The nature of this impact is likely to result in reduced demand for face to face access across the 38% of WCC buildings (excluding schools) where public access is currently provided. In view of the development time required to develop online channels and the imperative to make cost savings in the short term, delaying the rationalisation of buildings that provide public access until the benefits of online developments are realised is not a realistic option. Consequently, the current Property Review project will be informed by work underway to identify locations for One Stop Shops/Community Hubs and the range of services that can be co-located. The relatively high cost of face to face provision, its importance to our most vulnerable citizens and its key role in our narrowing the gaps objective means that the nature and positioning of facilities needs careful consideration. Investment in a static building is, by definition, long term and face to face facilities need to be designed flexibly to take account of future changes in services and need.

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2.8   This is not just about the point of customer access, it is also about re-designing our services around the needs of the customer and taking the opportunity to review the way we do things. To ask the question whether we could do things more cheaply and more efficiently. By doing this we can protect more of the services which the community value.

3.0   Project Governance

3.1   The projects in the One Front Door programme are managed by the One Front Door Advisory & Steering Group. The Group comprises key project team representatives and senior representatives from the service directorates and carries out the functions of a project board, but also provides a forum for the liaison and co-ordination with related projects/programmes in directorates. The Group meets at monthly intervals and is chaired by the Head of Customer Service and Communications.

3.2   The overall One Front Door programme is directed and overseen by the One Front Door and Property Programme Board which is chaired by the Leader of the Council and includes portfolio holders for Resources, Customers Workforce and Governance and Children Young People and Families and the Strategic Director for Customers, Workforce and Governance. The Head of Customer Service and Communications provides the link between the One Front Door Advisory & Steering Group and the One Front Door and Property Programme Board, reporting upwards on progress of the projects and implementing the Programme Board's directions and decisions through the Advisory and Steering Group. The Head of Development sits on both the Programme Board and the Advisory and Steering Group to ensure that this is fully co-ordinated with our property rationalisation work.

3.3   It has become clear that the One Front Door programme scope has naturally extended over the course of the research phase of the work. At the same time the emergence of closely related projects in directorates' transformation programmes raises the prospect of duplication of effort and/or conflicting or inefficient solutions being developed. We are working to ensure a co-ordinated approach through a closer liaison with projects including Area Hubs for Adult Social Care and Childrens Services, Locality working and the overall changes which the Council will have to implement to rationalise its services in response to the financial pressure it faces.

David Carter
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15th October 2010

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