

# INDIVIDUALS OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

# REPORT

1<sup>st</sup> November 2011

**Subject Heading:**

**Customer Services Interface with Adult Social Care**

**CMT Lead:**

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**Policy context:**

Adult Services is committed to embracing the opportunity and need to transform the Health and Social Care infrastructure to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. With demographic changes, limited resources, and increasing levels of dependency, it is imperative to strive for more efficient systems that provide our residents with the right outcome, first time, giving local people the opportunities to shape their own lives.

## SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of how the customer services interface with adult social care is being developed as part of the Havering 2014 Customer Services Transformation programme. The aim is to make it easier for customers to contact the Council enabling it to become more efficient. Which will assist adult social care services in responding to the demographic and financial pressures it faces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

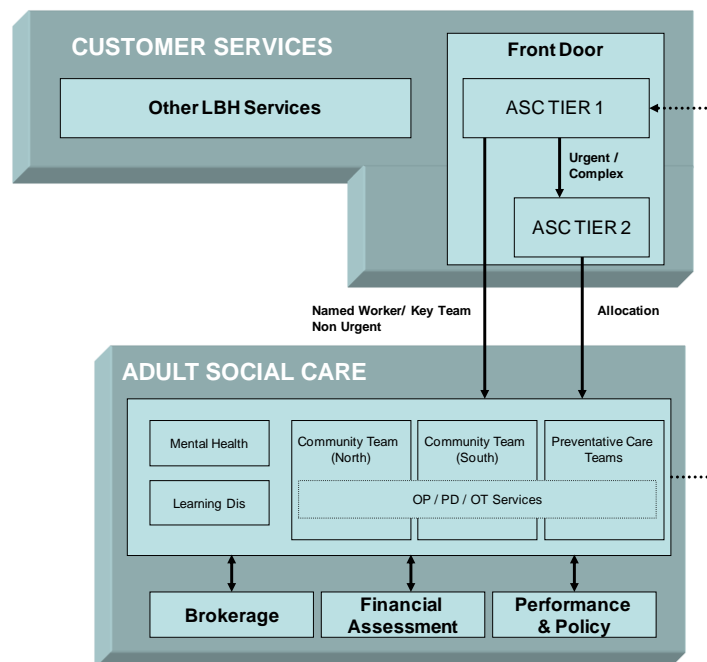
REPORT DETAIL

## BACKGROUND

1. The Council's Customer Services 'Vision' is: ***To enable those customers who can, to access services by themselves. For those customers who cannot, we will provide targeted, quality and cost effective services.***
2. The Council needs to ensure that it is working in the most efficient way possible to be able to offer an effective service to the public whilst keeping costs low.
3. Our overarching vision for Adult Social Care in Havering is to enable people "***to live as independent and fulfilling lives as possible based on choices that are important to them. Promoting the independence and quality of life of all adults, but particularly older people and vulnerable adults, are priority outcomes***".  
Effective customer access to services and information are key to enabling choice.
4. Achieving these visions presents significant challenges but also brings opportunities to reshape services and focus more on prevention, enabling people to live in their own homes and in their own neighbourhoods.
5. Adult Social Care services are currently engaged in the delivery of three major programmes to enable the service to be: more strategic; more customer focused; more engaged with the community; working efficiently and effectively; empowering and enabling; and focused on getting it right first time:
  - The Internal Shared Services programme, which brought together the Council's finance, HR, payroll, pensions and procurement processes in one Shared Services Centre; introduced one online system to replace many paper-based processes, all aimed at cutting cut bureaucracy;
  - The Adults Transformation programme, which is focusing on investing in prevention and enabling people to live in their own homes and in their own neighbourhoods, which is the preferred choice of most older and disabled people; and
  - The Customer Services Transformation programme, which is the main focus of this report, which seeks to improve the customer services interface with adult social care services.

## **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

6. The Adult Social Care service was reorganised in April 2011 around four key stages:
  - Front Door (Access);
  - Reablement (Prevention);
  - Assessment, Re-assessment, Support Planning and Brokerage;
  - Review, Quality Assurance, Safeguarding and best use of resources.
7. Over the last 6 months, the Front Door service has been enlarged and transferred to Corporate Customer Services. The Front-Door service is responsible for the majority of non face-to-face contacts taken by the service which are received via telephone, email, or fax from care professionals (GPs, District Nurses other health professionals), care agencies (service providers, care homes) and from members of the public (customer, family, friends) etc.
8. The Front Door tier 1 service carries out the initial contact diagnostic, signposting callers where possible to appropriate agencies or services, or if a social care need is identified, it carries out the initial contact assessment using the Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) criteria to determine eligibility. The tier 1 service will pass on relevant contacts to either tier 2 or to the back-office teams dependant on the type of service and the urgency of the need. Contacts for more complex needs, those requiring authorisation to purchase service, or those care needs that require more emergency attention are passed directly to tier 2.
9. Tier 2 provide the first-line duty service, liaising with the other adult social care support functions (e.g. brokerage and safeguarding) and passing on enquiries to the relevant back-office team to progress cases as appropriate. Tier 2 staff also provide an in-office face-to-face support to PASC visitors as and when required.
10. The diagram below shows the relationships between Customer Services (tier 1 and tier 2) and Adult Social Care.



11. Better information and advice is a key underpinning element of the personalisation of adult social care, as it enables people to make informed choices about services and activities, empowers them to understand how to meet their needs effectively and can delay or prevent the need for more acute support developing. It can also save costs as well as improving the quality of life for citizens by providing generic advice on housing and health issues supporting staying independent at home, such as handyman services, energy efficiency and personal safety, and community based leisure and social activities such as bowls clubs and bridge evenings etc.
12. As part of the Adults Transformation Programme, and consultation with key local stakeholders, a new model of Information and Advice was agreed in May 2011, which includes the development of an accessible new website, a shop on High Street, Romford and out-reach services, all of which will be launched later this year.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICES INTERFACE WITH ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

13. To further the development of customer services interface with adult social care, a joint Customer Services Transformation/Adult Social Care project is underway, which aims to:
  - Improve the overall end-to-end customers experience when they contact Adult Social Care through improved consistency of contact handling, higher quality of information and advice and an improved service response; and
  - Deliver the systems, process or organisational change to enable a reduction in overall external service expenditure.
14. The two areas of focus for the project are:
  - a. Enhancement of the current Front Door service within Customer Services to:
    - Optimise the volume of contacts passed from both tier 1 and tier 2 (and where possible reduce), to create additional capacity within the back-office.
    - Capture and present information accurately, consistently and appropriately when it is transferred between teams to eliminate unnecessary and inefficient activity handling within the back-office service.
    - Deploy customer services resources (people and tools) to deliver an efficient, effective and high-quality experience for the customer.
  - b. Development of Adult Social Care systems to improve customer service by:
    - Transferring further customer facing contact activities, where practitioner or care management professional input is deemed non-essential, from the back-office of the adult social care service to the Front Door.
    - Enabling channel shift from more expensive contact type to less expensive contact types for the Council. This will include movement of existing

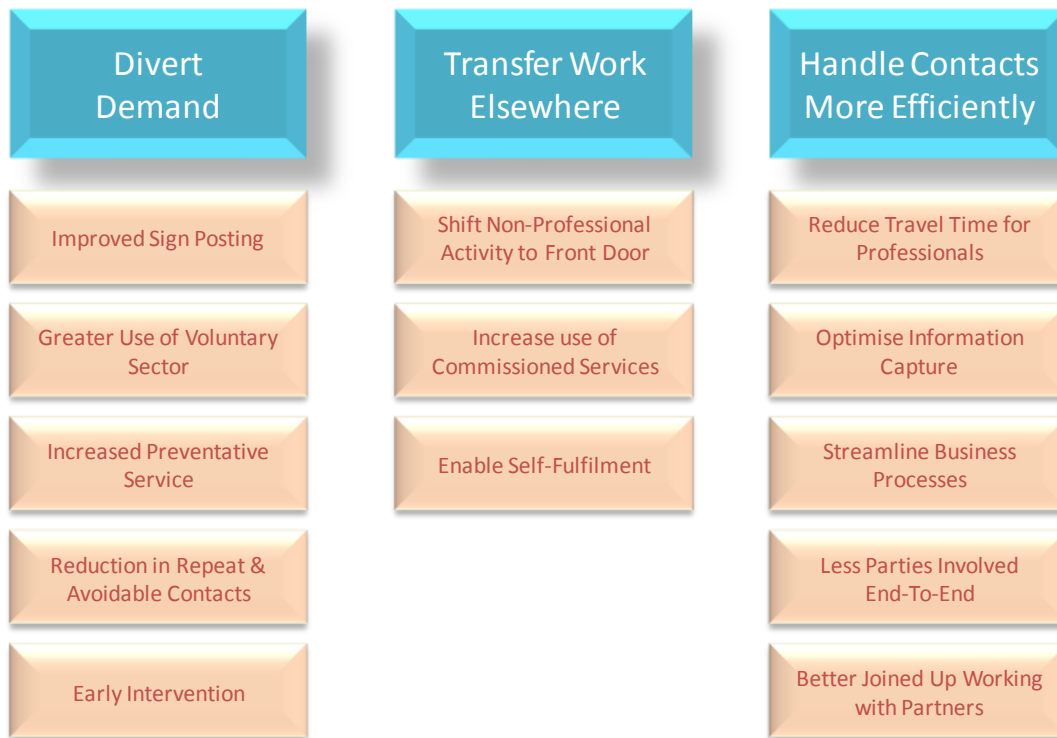
contacts from Tier 1 to the Web and an introduction of capabilities to facilitate a reduction in face-to-face contacts at the back-office.

15. It is anticipated that the enhancements to the current Front Door will be completed by the end of March 2012, but that some of the development to adult social care systems will take longer and require organisational and cultural change within service, and so will be continued as part of the Adults Transformation Programme.

16. These changes will be handled sensitively and in a way which insures vulnerable clients will not be placed at risk, and that the overall service arrangements in Adult Social Care will not be undermined.

**ANTICIPATED BENEFITS FROM AN IMPROVED CUSTOMER INTERFACE**

17. Financial savings from the enhanced customer service interface with adult social care will be realised from the three key areas as identified in the diagram below:



18. These three key areas are aimed at ensuring that professionals within Adult Social Care are dealing with those activities most appropriate to input from professional and enables these staff to focus time and effort on those customers in most need.

- Diverting Demand – moving a proportion of activity out of the ASC management system and into alternative sources of supply including increased use of the Front Door operation within Customer Services.
- Transfer Work Elsewhere – shifting activity to the most appropriate points in the delivery process by migrating workload from relatively costly and labour intensive points to lower cost and self-service options.

- Handle Contacts More Efficiently – improving end-to-end business process by adopting streamlined service provision, remove repetition of activity, automate processes, reduce administration activities and eliminate non value added steps.

19. In addition to the financial benefits above, improvements in the quality of the overall customer experience for Adult Social Care service customers are expected and will include:

- Reduction in the number of times a customer is asked to provide the same information to the Council.
- Consistency in information provision ensuring that regardless of channel of contact used, or the staff with whom the customer is speaking, the information received is the same (and relevant).
- Improved responsiveness to contact, removing delays and causes of customer irritation.
- Reduced volume of service complaints
- Enhanced customer insight and management information reporting enabling future service provision to be better targeted at customer needs

## **SUMMARY**

20. Over the past 6 months Adult Social Care services have made improvements to their Front Door services, and further developments are planned to make it easier for our customers to contact us and enabling the Council to be more efficient in providing these services.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

*There is a **corporate** requirement to set out the implications and risks of the decision sought, in the following areas*

### **Financial implications and risks:**

Savings targets in respect of the Customer Services interface with Adult Social Care in a full year are £82,500 as a result of front office migration (moving staff and services from the back office to the front office) and £129,400 through back office efficiencies. The back office efficiencies are expected to arise from improved business processes, automation, integration with back-office systems and streamlined service provision. The MTFS targets sit under the Customer Services programme and are monitored in terms of achievement through existing corporate channels.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

There are no apparent legal implications or risks in noting this report.

### **Human Resources implications and risks:**

There are no direct HR implications presented by the information contained in this report. Any workforce issues resulting from changes to service delivery as described in this report will be dealt with within the specific Transformation Programme, or service area, from which it originates, in line with the Council's agreed HR policy framework.

**Equalities implications and risks:**

The Customer Services Transformation programme has completed an Equality & Fairness Framework Impact Assessment for the Customer Services Strategy and this is included at Appendix A.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**Appendix A – Equality & Fairness Framework**

**Impact Assessment for the Customer Services Strategy**

**1. What is the scope and intended outcomes of the policy/procedure/function (project, programme) being assessed?**

*A Vision for Customer Services...*

*Our aim is to enable those customers who can to access services by themselves.  
For those customers who cannot, we will provide targeted, quality and cost effective services.*

We seek to achieve this by:

- Developing a strong self serve offering using the web and new media
- Collaborating with public, private and third sector partners to deliver the most effective and targeted service
- Delivering a single view of the customer
- Using customer insight/segmentation to target services
- Streamlining business processes
- Reducing avoidable contact

We want to provide a comprehensive and integrated front and back office service, joined up with other service providers and delivered through effective self service and effective partnerships.

The benefits of achieving this vision include among others:

- A significant reduction in the cost of high volume contacts
- The ability to offer those customers most in need targeted and high quality care
- Improved satisfaction with council services and thus and improved reputation
- The ability to use customer intelligence to plan and target future services to the correct customer groups
- Collaborating with partners such as health services to ensure a holistic customer experience

**2. Does this assessment relate to (tick as appropriate):**

Internal dimension – staffing & organisation impact	
External dimension – community impact	
Both dimensions	Both



**3. What data/information is available (or can be obtained) about the individuals and groups affected the policy/procedure/function (project, programme)?**

Using Customer data from the Experian Customer Segmentation project, census and other Council databases, we are able to form a good image of the diversity of customers whom we serve.

Similarly, the Council holds data on their entire staff that is used to ensure that communications about the programme are both targeted and bespoke to the staff group. At the same time, it allows us to ensure fairness in all aspects of the programme.

**4. What is the extent of the impact arising out of the implementation of policy/procedure/function (project, programme) recommendations and decisions? Are there any adverse impacts?**

The programme will impact on all customers wishing to contact the council. It will impact on a number post within the council. Changes to structure are covered in a separate Consultation in which equality impacts are considered.

**5. What is the evidence of disproportionate group impact, given the demography of those affected by the change (as identified in question 3)? Can any disproportionality be justified**

There is no disproportionate group impact. The changes to the manner in which the services will be delivered will impact equally across all current service users. It is envisioned that services will become less complicated to contact. Though self serve will be the main focus of service delivery, all current access channels will remain available. With the reduction in traffic due to channel shift, traditional channels will become less congested thus allowing the most vulnerable to contact us more easily. Changes to our numbering strategy will also make it easier for customers to navigate council services.

**6. What is the scope for action to mitigate adverse impact?**

Though there are no directly adverse impacts for customers, a large focused communications plan is in place to inform customers of changes that will make their contacts with the council more effective.

**7. Once implemented, how do you intend to monitor the actual impact of the proposed change?**

One of the key success factors for the Customer Services Programme is the level of reported customer satisfaction. This is being measured prior to the changes the programme will bring and then again after the changes have been implemented. The measurements include equality data that will allow us to determine if any group specifically experiences greater or lesser customer satisfaction. Negative changes in customer satisfaction will be followed up by more targeted work to discover what changes need to be made to ensure fairness in the overall customer service experience.