



15 December 2015

**Corporate Policy & Resources
Committee**

Subject: Closer to the Customer – the Case for Change.

Report by:	Ian Knowles – Director of Resources
Contact Officer:	Michelle Carrington Strategic Lead – Customer First Tel 01427 675134 Michelle.carrington@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose/Summary:	To advise on the outcome of the consultation process to build the vision and case for change on the Closer to the Customer Programme.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1. That the outcome of the consultation; and Case for Change is noted.**
- 2. That the Committee agree that Closer to the Customer can continue to the Programme Initiation and Design stage.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None

Financial: Delivery of the Closer to the Customer programme will have financial investment requirements for technology and change management. As yet these have not been defined explicitly.

Staffing: None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights: E&D Risk assessments will be undertaken for key deliverables and decisions within the programme.

Risk Assessment: None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: To be defined in later stages of the programme.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Consultation information with Strategic Lead – Customer First

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

x

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

x

1. Background

Under the remit of Customer First, the Council has embarked on a consultation process to establish the 'Case for Change in the Council'; with the overall purpose of defining the remit and scope of the Closer to the Customer programme.

The purpose of the Closer to the Customer programme is to redesign the way the Council operates to ensure we 'put the customer at the heart of everything we do'. It will challenge our approach to delivering services; as well as looking at how we can use digital and advanced business technology and new ways of working to improve the way we operate; and to ensure we are delivering an excellent customer experience in our service delivery.

2. Process and Approach

The Council decided to undertake a consultation process to gain an understanding of the problems experienced by our Customers and other Stakeholders in terms of our service delivery approach; and to capture opportunities and suggestions on how our Customers, Officers and Members may want to access, interact, engage and operate in the future.

The first stage of consultation has been completed with our 'internal stakeholders'. This has included formal workshop events with CLT & Strategic Leads, Team Managers, Employees and Councillors.

This paper provides an insight into the findings of this consultation and the status of the Case for Change so far.

Further consultation will be undertaken with Customers, Officers and Members during the 'Design' stage to provide a more comprehensive layer of information on their views on how customers will access our services in the future, the processes we follow, the technology used; and the way in which our employees will behave and operate.

The workshops identified both positive and negatives aspects of the service delivery which helps to define the Council's 'Case for Change' and the problems and issues that would need to be overcome through the Closer to the Customer programme. The consultees then went on to identify good practises of customer centric organisations; and key changes that the Council could make to enhance and increase our customer service; and the improve experience of the Customer.

This information was distilled into some key guiding principles, outcomes and expectations which will inform the Design stage of the Closer to the Customer programme.

The remainder of this document provides a diagrammatic summary of those. Section 1 highlights some of the problems and issues found; Section 2 details the top level guiding principles and Section 3 identifies the key outcomes expected from the programme.

Section 1: Highlights of Current Situation and Issues Experienced



Section 2: Principles of Closer to the Customer

The consultation identified six key themes under which the principles of the Closer to the Customer outcomes could be grouped.



Section 3: The Vision of Closer to the Customer

The following identifies the vision, outcomes and expectations of any redesigned service delivery model delivered through the Closer to the Customer programme. This information will be supplemented by working with our Customers and Stakeholders to develop the concept.

Access

- A range of access channels are available that allow choice; flexibility, convenience and up-to 24/7 hour access to services and information for our Customers; and Customers can utilise multiple channels easily and simply without loss of experience.
- Customers are able to either self-serve or receive assistance in obtaining services and information, depending on their personal circumstances, preferences and needs at that time.
- Customers are provided with the right type of support and guidance to fully understand what **they** need to do to receive the information, decision or service they require.
- Customers are able to access a rich source of data on themselves, their household, their services and their accounts easily.

Service Delivery

- Services are pro-active, responsive, adaptive and are empathetic to Customer's needs.
- There is recognition of distinct customer groups; and services are tailored around their varying needs, preferences and behaviours.
- There is integration and promotion of a range of services (both regulatory and chargeable) around the needs of the Customer.
- The Customer's journey and experience is a key part of the service delivery model; and processes are designed to be simple and easy; and focussed around of the Customer; not the Council.
- The focus of any interaction with Customers is on outcomes not response.
- Standardisation and automation of processes and responses is adopted where possible for basic, simple or repetitive services.
- Services balance standardisation of processes and responses; against more bespoke solutions when the need arises.
- Delivery may be integrated with and/or devolved to other voluntary, public or private sector bodies to better address the needs of the Customer as a whole.

Service Providers

- The Frontline is capable, skilled and empowered to handle and resolve Customer enquiries and transactional service requests, preferably at first point of contact; and have a rich source of data available which supports that outcome.
- Service Providers are better supported by improved information and procedures; that result in them having focus and clarity on outcomes and being better able progress the Customer's request to their satisfaction.
- Senior, experienced professionals are released to focus on complex areas that need high levels of specialist skills.
- Advanced, enabling technology is used to facilitate more efficient working; better enquiry and case management and enhanced effective service delivery.
- Improved ways of working facilitates a better work / life balance; job satisfaction and offers choice of working styles, thereby encouraging high performing employees.

Information

- Collation of comprehensive information on individual Customers, detailing the interactions, services, needs and preferences; supports a better customer experience and more satisfying and high quality interactions.
- Customer analytics data facilitates improvements when opportunities and problems experienced by our Customers emerge; and allows a more pro-active response to changing trends and behaviours in service-take-up.
- Rich intelligence data is available to provide the Council with insight on how to adapt and improve services in the medium to long term.

Communities

- Communities, Community Groups and Parish Councils are facilitated to solve local issues, with support and guidance from the Council.
- Members are enabled to take a community leadership role; and to focus on community development rather than service failure.

Reputation

- The Councils approach and response to service delivery, (along with its contribution to the quality of life; and its commitment to the growth and development of the District) engenders an excellent reputation.
- Customers see the Council as the provider of choice for other value added chargeable services; around its regulatory service delivery.

Section 4: Key Outcomes of Closer to the Customer

We know we have delivered our vision when we at least have these things:

