

Chichester District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 November 2020

Future Customer Services delivery

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1. **The Committee is invited to consider the contents of this report and attached Initial Project Proposal document (IPPD) and make any comments to Cabinet.**

3. Background

3.1 Since Covid-19 there has been a significant change in the way in which our customers are accessing our services. It is evident that when customers have to access our services differently they will do this. This is extremely encouraging and these proposals seek to build on the changes to date.

3.2 The table below shows how customers have been accessing our services. Website and online channel take up increased the most. It is encouraging to note that whilst overall customer demand has increased during the period 1 April – 30 September 2020 compared to the same time last year the vast majority of customers have chosen to use the Council's website and online services.

3.3 This shows that some customers prefer to use online services and will therefore choose to do so. As a Council we need to ensure moving forward that our online services continue to be developed to support increased online service take up. Additionally we need to ensure that our face to face provision is modern and fit for purpose. The attached IPPD (Appendix 1) sets down how the customer contact centre at East Pallant House can be reconfigured to best deliver an efficient service to customers. Not only does this help to minimise operational costs but it also provides services in the way in which many people now expect to be able to transact with service providers.

Customer services by channel data

Channel	01/04/19 - 30/09/19	01/04/20 - 30/09/20
Telephone calls (presented)	53,921	65,599
Face-to-face	9,489	365*
Website	320,389	440,294
Total	383,799	506,258

**relates predominantly to collections for resident visitors permits and taxi licenses*

4. Outcomes to be achieved

- 4.1. That the Committee consider the recommendations as set out in 2.1.
- 4.2. To support the Council modernising the way it delivers its services both online and face to face.
- 4.3. To encourage residents and visitors who can to self-serve and use the Council's online services freeing up officer capacity to best meet the needs of vulnerable customers.
- 4.4. To use management information moving forward to aid further improvements both to the Council's website, online services and back office service teams thus helping residents to become resilient where possible.
- 4.5. To deliver efficiency savings to support the Council's organisational recovery plan.

5. Proposals

5.1 It is acknowledged that for some customers it is more difficult for them to transact with the Council online and as such the proposals for re-modelling the Customer Services Centre (CSC) take account of this factor. Proposals for re-modelling the CSC include the following key changes: -

- All enquiries to be triaged before appointments are offered and where an enquiry can be resolved online, the customer will be signposted to a self-service PC and provided with digital assistance as required;
- Where a customer is vulnerable and unable to use online facilities, an officer will help the customer to resolve the enquiry. This will include where appropriate helping customers navigate around the website and complete online forms and obtain information to resolve their enquiry. Where this can be done at the time of their arrival to the CSC it will be. Should it be deemed more appropriate for an appointment to be made one will be. Any appointments made will be as soon as is reasonably practical. Officers are provided with guidance to help them identify those who may need more personalised help, but this is not prescriptive and officers will be trained and encouraged to use their judgement and discretion to support those who need most help;
- Customer Service Officers will be floor walking and will be available to signpost, help and guide customers who visit the CSC with their enquiry;
- Self-service scanning facilities are being progressed and in the interim documents can be dropped off in the post-box whilst the building is closed to the public. Customers are encouraged to use the Council's online services and email facilities to provide and upload documentary evidence where they are able to;
- Active promotion of digital channels and increased signage promoting the benefits of using the Council's online services to aid increased and continuous take up of online services.

6. Alternatives considered

- 6.1. That the CSC is re-opened in the format it operated pre Covid-19. This option is not recommended due to losing the momentum gained to date particularly with changes in residents and member of the public's behaviour where they have become familiar and used to using the Council's online services.
- 6.2. That the CSC is not re-opened at all. This is not recommended given the need to better understand the consequences of this including greater management information to aid informed decision making over the future of the CSC provision.

7. Resource and legal implications

- 7.1. Savings of £55k can be delivered by adopting these changes.
- 7.2. There are no legal implications from these proposals.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Organisational Recovery Group, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. The Council's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has been engaged with and support these proposals.
- 8.2 A survey of customers was undertaken and the results are attached at appendix 2. Whilst this does not constitute a consultation the views reflected in the survey have been taken into account when making the proposals.

9. Community impacts and corporate risks

- 9.1. The proposed savings from adopting these proposals help to reduce operational costs and assist in the Council's efficiency savings review.

10. Diversity implications

- 10.1 In considering the proposed changes for the CSC, an Equality Impact Assessment (see Appendix 3) has been undertaken to ensure that any adverse impact to residents who share a protected characteristic has been considered and mitigated where this is possible. The analysis has identified a potential adverse impact on some protected groups who may not be able to use online facilities such as older customers, customers with disabilities and customers whose first language is not English. This impact has been mitigated by the measures taken to ensure that customers who are unable to use online facilities can continue to access services through existing face to face and phone arrangements and additional assistance as referred to in paragraph 5.1 of this report.
- 10.2 There are also positive outcomes arising for protected groups as improved online facilities enable customers with mobility issues to access services from home and those seeking help to use online facilities can access services from the CSC.

11. Other Implications

- 11.1

	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		X
Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation		X
Human Rights and Equality Impact (see separate Appendix 3)	X	
Safeguarding and Early Help		X
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		X
Health and Wellbeing		X

12. Appendices

1. Initial Project Proposal document (IPPD)
2. Customer Survey results
3. Equalities Impact Assessment

13. Background papers

- 13.1. None